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CONTAINING OUTLINES OF

SIX HUNDRED SERMONS,

FOR ALL THE

SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR;

ALSO FOR OTHER SOLEMN OCCASIONS.

COMPILED

FROM THE WORKS OF EMINENT PREACHERS

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First Sunday of Advent.

VII.

HOMILY.

Jesus had foretold that persecutions would befall his disciples, and that the divine wrath would overtake Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. This prophecy concludes with the dispersion of the Jews among the nations; whereupon "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles; till the times of the nations be fulfilled." (Lk. xxi, 24.) The Apostle reveals to us that a part of Israel would remain in darkness, until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. Rom. xi, 25. Then when the Gospel had been preached throughout the whole world, the consummation should come. Mt. xxiv, 14. John x, 16. In the Gospel of this first Sunday of Advent we read what our Lord deigned to foretell of the consummation of all things. From it we learn that the final catastrophe of this visible world will be dreadful to sinners, but consoling to the just.

I.

THE LAST TIME WILL BE DREADFUL TO SINNERS.

(1.) Because of the signs in heaven; (2) because of the distress on earth; (3) because of the coming of the Judge.

1. Regarding the signs in heaven, our Saviour says: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." St. Matthew (xxiv, 24) gives a more minute description, saying: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven;" i. e., the stars shall quit their wonted stations and shall not give their light, whereupon a general disorder and confusion will ensue. A still more detailed description of these signs is given II Thess. ii, 2, and especially Apoc. vi, 12; viii; ix; xvi.—It is on your account, impenitent sinners, that these signs will appear in the heavens. "He will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies. And

the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise." Wisd. v, 18, 21. The sun will be darkened, because he has been witness of your many sins committed in the light of day. The moon, the faithful witness in heaven, as David calls her (Ps. lxxxviii, 38), will reveal your dark deeds committed during the night. The stars, which are ever ready to fulfill the will of God, will be confounded, as it were, because of your disobedience. These same sun, moon, and stars, whose light renders this world a habitable abode, will be darkened.—At the aspect of these beneficent orbs, remember the Last Judgment, and never do anything, either by day, or by night, for which you would have reason to be terrified on that Day of wrath.

Woe to the impenitent sinner! On him the sun of grace will shine no more; the Church, which like the moon enlightens us in the night of darkness, will, for him, have vanished; Mary "fair as the moon" will have forsaken him; no friendly star will ever again shine on him in heaven; even his guardian angel, and all his intercessors with God, will have abandoned to herself his accursed soul. "He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him: and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him." Ps. cviii, 18. This exceedingly great anguish of the sinner is expressed in the following words:

2. "And upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves: men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world." The sinner cannot but wither away on that "*dies irae*," "a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds." (Sophonias i, 15.) The sea and the earth will take revenge on the sinner for having contaminated them by his sins. O ye proud, avaricious, and fleshly, men, you will howl when sun, moon, and stars, the sea and the earth, call upon you the wrath of their God.

3. "And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty." The *Son of man*, who atoned for their sins, will be the Judge of sinners. He will come

in a cloud. In a cloud he had ascended into heaven; and "this Jesus shall so come" to judge the living and the dead. He will come, not again in humility and self-abasement, but with great power and majesty.

They shall see him coming. "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him" (Apoc. i, 7), and they that crucified again to themselves the Son of God. Heb. vi, 6. If the sons of Jacob could not utter a word, when Joseph, shedding tears of joy, said to them, Come nearer to me, I am Joseph, your brother: how great will be the fear of sinners, when instead of the words, "Come nearer to me," they hear: "Depart from me, ye cursed." "And they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?" Apoc. vi, 16. As illustrations may serve Baltassar (Dan. iv, 6), and Felix (Act xxiv, 25). Cf. Ps. cxlii, 2; Apoc. i, 17.

Let us avoid sin for the future; and our past sins let us confess during this blessed time of Advent, that the Day of Judgment may bring us consolation and blessing, instead of terror and a curse.

II.

THE LAST TIME WILL BE TO THE JUST A GREAT CONSOLATION.

(1.) Because their redemption is at hand; and (2) because the kingdom of God will begin.

1. "But when these things begin to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand." Who are they that will rejoice, as the bride rejoices at the coming of the spouse, whilst the whole world will tremble? They are the true disciples of the Lord, to whom it had been promised: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth Him that sent me, hath everlasting life; and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life." John v, 24. Not those false disciples who only said: "Lord! Lord!" but those

who did the will of their Heavenly Father, and who are not judged, because they judged themselves. I Cor. xi, 31.

They will lift up their heads. Hitherto sinners lifted up their heads, sneering at the pious Christians. Now their exclamation will be: "These are they, whom we had some time in derision. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred." Wisd. v, 5. The true disciples of Jesus will rejoice, because they know that all these signs are the forebodings of the redemption that is at hand. They behold the sign of the Son of man, the cross, once despised by the world, now resplendent in the clouds. They behold Him, after whom they carried their cross.

Their redemption is at hand:—redemption from all the misery of this world, and especially from sin. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them." Wisd. iii, 1. Temporal life had no charms for them, wherefore they sighed with St. Paul: "Unhappy man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. viii, 24. Now their daily prayer, Thy kingdom come, is granted, the enemy *death* having been destroyed last. (I Cor. xv, 26). "Made like to the body of his glory" (Philip iii, 13), they will triumphantly exclaim: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" I Cor. xv, 55. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Apoc. xxi, 4.—We all, who live still in the land of our exile, let us say daily with St. John: "Come, Lord Jesus." Apoc. xxii, 20.

2. But when will this happy hour come? When are we to be delivered from our captivity? Jesus gives an answer to this question in a similitude, taken from the fig-tree, and all the trees. "When they shoot forth their fruit, we know that summer is nigh." The above signs announce with the same certainty the end of the world. "What things man shall sow, those also shall he reap." Gal. vi, 8. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Ps. cxxv, 5.

Then will the kingdom of God be at hand, the glory which

the Son had with the Father, before the world was (John xvii, 5), and prepared for the Elect from the foundation of the world (Mt. xxv, 34).

Let us then in all things fulfill the will of God, never forgetting that, after praying for the coming of the heavenly kingdom, we immediately add: "Hallowed be thy name."

Let us strengthen our courage in enduring the tribulations of this life by the assurance of our Lord: "Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled." Forty years later when that generation had not passed away, the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem was literally fulfilled; and the destruction of the world, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was but a figure, will also take place at a time known to God alone. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

VIII.

(Panegyric on St. Andrew, Apostle.)

WHAT THE CROSS WAS TO ST. ANDREW.

St. Andrew could truly say: "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross." Gal. ii, 19. The Cross was to Christ (1) a pulpit from which he preached by word and example humility, patience, and other virtues. (2) An altar on which he sacrificed himself, of his own free will, for the redemption of men. "He was offered because it was his own will." Isai. liii, 7. (3) A throne of his glory because by his sufferings he merited to be exalted and glorified. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name." Philip. ii, 8. In a similar way the Cross was to St. Andrew

I. THE PULPIT OF HIS APOSTOLATE.

The principal office of the Apostles consisted in preaching the word of God. "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the

Gospel to every creature." Mk. xvi, 15. Faithful to his mission, St. Andrew indefatigably preached the good tidings, carrying the light of faith to Samaria, Scythia, Achaia, and other countries, and at last ascended the cross—the most admirable pulpit from which he preached to the people the word of God

1. *With abundant grace.* It is an easy task to preach the Cross when you have not to suffer. And however eloquent a preacher may be, it behoves him not to exhort others to lead an arduous and austere life, if he himself leads an easy and comfortable life. "Therefore the Son of God preached the Gospel as the man of sorrows, and St. Andrew on the cross preached the Crucified, that, far from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, he had not to fear reproach." St. Chrysostom.

2. *Forcibly and convincingly.* Our fellow-men are never better persuaded, than when we make our own conviction evident, and "the surest way to effect this is, when we strengthen our voice by the voice of our actions." St. Bernard. Now, was it possible for St. Andrew to show more forcibly his conviction of the value of the cross, than by his willingness to die on it? The records of his sufferings give evidence of his love of the cross.

3. *With salutary effect.* Hence so many conversions, which God effected through his Apostle Andrew. The fame thereof soon spread throughout the neigboring provinces; and the church of Achaia, where St. Andrew died a martyr, became soon famous for her zeal, and for the multitude of her children.

II. THE ALTAR OF HIS SACRIFICE.

God has at all times demanded sacrifices in homage of his supreme power. "God demands sacrifices at all times." St. Basil.

1. What is to be regarded in every sacrifice?

According to St. Augustine, we must observe:

a. By whom the sacrifice is offered; for the sacrifices offered up to God by the wicked, cannot be acceptable to Him who is infinite sanctity.

b. The gift that is offered. At the period of the Mosaic

Law products of the field and animals were immolated; but during the time of grace God demands our own selves as a sacrifice. "Whatever you give beside yourself, God does not regard, because he does not seek your gift, but yourself." Thomas a Kempis.

c. To whom the sacrifice is offered. Sacrifices are a kind of worship, due neither to men nor to angels, but only to the Supreme Being.

2. Regarding the sacrifice of St. Andrew, all these conditions were complied with, wherefore his sacrifice was perfect.

a. St. Andrew himself, the just and holy disciple of the Lord, offered up the sacrifice.

b. St. Andrew immolated himself. The Church says of him: "The man of God was led to the slaughter."

c. He sanctified himself to God through love. When he first caught sight of the gibbet on which he was to die, he greeted the precious wood with joy. "O good cross," he cried, "receive me into thy arms, and present me to my Master, that He who redeemed me through thee, may now accept me from thee." "The heart of St. Andrew, sacrificing himself upon the cross, was burning with sacred love." St. Bernard.

Oh! that we all would in a similar way sacrifice ourselves to God! "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." I Pet. ii, 9. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service." Rom. xii, 1.

III. THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY.

"The martyrs scoffed at the tyrants, saying: Your cruelty is our glory." Tertullian. St. Andrew could address the tyrant Aegeas in the same words; for the cross which was deemed to bring ignominy upon him, has become his throne of honor and glory.

1. St. Andrew himself considered it as a great honor to die on the cross. "He deemed nothing more glorious than to bear the ignominy of Christ the Lord." St. Bernard. With

good reason, since "gloriatio omnium gloriationum est crux." St. Cyril.

2. St. Andrew was reverenced on the cross by the by-standers. Aegeas had St. Andrew nailed to the cross in order to dishonor him, and to persuade the crowd of his wickedness, who had deserved so great a punishment. But the reverse was the case. All who were present praised him as a Saint.

3. St. Andrew receives great homage from the Church because of the cross. If he had died with a royal crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand, his memory would have been lost. But because he suffered death on the cross as a true hero for Jesus Christ, "all those venerate the lover of the Cross who are the servants of the Cross." St. Bernard.

4. St. Andrew was glorified by God because of the cross. He received, as a reward of his death on the cross, the crown of eternal beatitude. "St. Andrew prevented the people from delivering him from the cross, lest he should lose the honor of the cross and the crown prepared for him in heaven." St. Bernard. One may therefore apply to St. Andrew what is said of Jesus himself: "We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Heb. ii, 9.

Oh! that we also would seek our honor in the cross! Let us, with St. Andrew, suffer with patience and perseverance, that we may obtain with him the crown of eternal beatitude!

Laselve.

Second Sunday of Advent.

VII.

HOMILY.

John the Baptist was cast into prison, because he had dared to utter the truth. Yet even in prison he endeavors to promote the glory of the Bridegroom, and the salvation of his disciples, many of whom would not believe in Jesus of Nazareth. Although he had pointed out the Lamb of God, declaring publicly that Jesus must increase, but he decrease, and had done every thing to detach his disciples from himself, and lead them to Jesus, yet has recourse to another expedient, sending two of them to Jesus, that they might hear from his own lips and see by his deeds, that He was the Messias. They ask him as messengers of their master: "Art thou he that art to come, or do we look for another?" Let us hear what Jesus says of himself, and what, in addition, he says of John.

I.

WHAT DOES JESUS SAY OF HIMSELF?

1. Jesus does not content himself with saying, "Yes, I am." Of what avail would it have been to repeat what John himself had publicly confessed? But he appealed at once to his works as proofs of his being the Messias. "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again." Jesus refers in these words to the prophecy of Isaias xxxv, 4: "God himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened; and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart; and the tongue of the dumb shall be free." This prophecy was one of those known to every Israelite. Jesus argues: The miracles foretold by Isaias are now performed by me. Consequently God himself is come to save you.

The disciples of John were kindly received by Jesus. He

is desirous of hearing also our petitions whenever we present them to him. "Counsel and equity is mine; prudence is mine; strength is mine. With me are riches and glory." Prov. viii, 14, 18. "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden: and I will refresh you."

Our Holy Church, the bride of Christ, also appeals to her miraculous works, in order to prove her divine mission. In no century has Jesus left himself without testimony, as the acts of canonization evidently substantiate. Especially in heathen lands, God works miracles in confirmation of the truth of the Gospel. Thus the mission of St. Francis Xavier is marked by its many miracles.

2. Jesus describes another characteristic feature by which he is to be recognized as the Messias, in the following words: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." The Jews knew that the Messias would be most revered, and his preaching most listened to by the poor and humble. Isaias had foretold it, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me: he hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart." Isai. lxi, 1. Jesus avowed also in the synagogue at Nazareth that this scripture was fulfilled in him. Lk. iv, 18-21. Indeed, with a few exceptions, it was the poor, as regards earthly goods, who followed Jesus, and listened to his good tidings. Those rich persons who seek their consolation in perishable things, are unwilling to hear the Gospel preached to them, because it speaks more of the contempt of the world, and of solicitude for heavenly things, than they are willing to hear. The rich men who followed Jesus, such as Zacheus and Joseph of Arimathea, had their hearts not attached to their riches. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

3. Jesus added: "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me." He warns them and all men not to despise him on account of his poverty or of his death on the Cross. Those who behold in Jesus only his human nature, are scandalized in him, and refuse to adore as their God Him who was looked upon as a

carpenter's son, and died the ignominious death of the Cross. But when we consider the innocence of his life, the divine character of his doctrine, the prophecies fulfilled in him, and the many miracles wrought either by him or in his name, we are no longer scandalized in him, but confess him to be God and Man, who is absolutely worthy of our love, because he debased himself and suffered for us.

II.

WHAT DOES JESUS SAY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST ?

When the messengers had left, Jesus spoke to the multitudes concerning John, that they might not form an unfavorable opinion of him, as though his own faith in Jesus was shaken. He therefore reminds the Jews of the purpose for which they had thronged into the desert, and of the overwhelming impression which the appearance of John had left on their minds, leaving them to infer the obvious conclusion that a man of John's character would not be likely to waver in his faith.

1. "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" You did not see in John an unstable man. He was immoveable as a rock. He did not lack the courage to remind soldiers and kings of their duty. Although he saw prison and death before him, he said to Herod: "It is not lawful."

You should never feel indignant at the priest when he reprimands you on account of your vices,—whether it be in the pulpit or in the confessional.

Be not a reed shaken with the wind, but whenever occasion offers, defend the honor of Jesus and the faith in him. "Fear not those that kill the body, and cannot kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." Mt. x, 28.

2. "But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings." If Jesus had first reminded the multitudes of the steadiness of character, which they had witnessed

in John; he now reminds them of his mortified life. "John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and he ate locusts and wild honey." Mk. i, 6.

Christ and his Apostles detested pride and luxury in any form. In our days, extravagance in dress, far from being confined to the houses of kings, has spread among all classes of people. We should, however, never forget that of all the virtues of his great Precursor Jesus extols most his mortification. For obvious reasons, the first Supreme Pastor of the faithful has laid down a golden rule concerning the external mortification behoving mothers and daughters, saying in his first epistle iii, 3: "Their adorning let it not be outward plaiting of the hair, nor the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God. For after this manner heretofore also the holy women, hoping in God, adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands."

3. "But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my Angel before thy face who shall prepare thy way before thee." The people knew that John was a prophet, for the miraculous circumstances of his birth were divulged over all the mountainous country of Judea. Lk. i, 65. Therefore multitudes went out to him into the desert, where he was preaching. Jesus confirms the general belief that John was a prophet, and more than a prophet, because he could point out the Lamb of God, the prophecy Mal. iii, 1 being thus fulfilled in John.

Jesus calls John also an angel; not only because he was his messenger, but also because of his virginity (Mk. xii, 25), and of his mortification, since he used an invisible rather than a visible meat and drink; an angel "sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation" (Heb. i, 14); knowing no greater joy than to convert sinners (Cf. Lk. xv, 10), and from his mother's womb to the end of his life rejoicing with the angelic choirs at the honor of God and the salvation of men. Lk. i, 44.

John iii, 29. O that we also would strive to be like good angels!

St. John was sent by God to prepare the way of the Messias. Holy Christmas, when our Saviour will come again into the heart of everyone, is at hand. Let us prepare his way before him, especially by a sincere and contrite confession of our sins.

VIII.

(*Panegyric on St. Francis Xavier.*)

THE APOSTLE OF INDIA AND JAPAN.

With this glorious title St. Francis Xavier, the great worker of miracles in the sixteenth century, the glory of the Catholic Church and of the Society of Jesus, has been honored in the Bull of his canonization and in other Pontifical documents, as well as in the Roman *Martyrologium*. We may, indeed, with good reason, apply to him the words of St. Paul the Apostle: "A servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God."

I. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER WAS CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE:

1. By divine predestination.

a. A sister of Francis Xavier, conspicuous for her extraordinary virtues, knew by divine revelation the future vocation of her brother; and when their father intended to induce him to embrace a secular state of life, she persuaded him to desist from this intention, saying that her brother was called by God to be the apostle of many nations.

b. It was a special disposition of Divine Providence, that Father Bobadilla, who was selected by St. Ignatius for India, fell dangerously sick, and Xavier was sent in his stead.

c. He then felt fulfilled what he had once dreamed, viz.: that he carried with great difficulty a Moor upon his shoulders.

d. King Juan III., struck with admiration of the virtue and science of the Saint and his companion Rodriguez, endeav-

ored to keep them in Lisbon. Their Superior St. Ignatius, inspired by God, bids Rodriguez to stay, and Francis to continue his journey. "You have not chosen me: but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and bring forth fruit." John xv, 16. "This man is a vessel of election to me, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings." Act ix, 15.

2. By divine mission.

He was sent by the vicar of Christ on earth, without whose consent the great missionaries, as Augustine, Boniface, etc., would not attempt to convert the Gentiles. Even St. Paul, although called to the apostolate immediately by Jesus Christ, feared to work in vain, unless he had seen Peter before he commenced his labors. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." John xx, 21. "How can they preach unless they be sent?" Rom. x, 15.

3. He fulfilled his mission as an apostle.

Renouncing worldly ambition and prospects, he burns with unbounded zeal for the honor of God, and the glory of the name of Jesus. He is poor in earthly goods of his own free will, but rich in science and sanctity. The Crucifix on his breast, his breviary under his arm, his staff in his hand, he embarks for remote countries to carry the good tidings to their unhappy inhabitants. "He hath rejoiced as a giant to run his way." Ps. xviii, 6.

4. He received as a pledge of his apostolic vocation the miraculous gift of languages, of prophecies, of healing the sick, stilling tempests, raising the dead to life, etc. The Lord thus accredited and glorified his apostle in the same manner as he did the apostles of the first age. "The signs of my apostleship have been wrought on you in all patience, in signs, and wonders and mighty deeds." II Cor. xii, 12.

Remember for what you are called, in general and in particular.—Importance of the choice of a state of life.—Preparation for your future vocation.—We are also as Christians obliged to promote the salvation of our fellow-men. How many opportunities are offered you, far and nigh, to fulfill this duty!

II. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER HAD THE APOSTOLIC SPIRIT:

1. *A firm faith.*

a. St. Francis *embraced* all revealed truths, and prayed, taught, sacrificed and suffered, in order to make them known to Christians and Gentiles. "Behold, I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth." Isai. xlix, 6.

b. He observed the *precepts and counsels* of the faith by his innocent and holy life. He was perfect in all virtues: a pure lily amidst the luxury of his father's house, in the society of his frivolous fellow-students, in demoralized cities, and among idolaters.

c. He clung to the *promises* of faith, putting all his confidence in Divine Providence in all his undertakings, labors and dangers. His confidence was so great, that God rewarded it by many miracles. During a great tempest, whilst all on board despaired, he knelt in prayer before the Crucifix, and when he arose he assured his fellow-passengers that he had never in his life perceived so much consolation as during the tempest: the salvation of all was the fruit of his prayer. Once he led a small number of his Christian fishermen against a vast army of bloodthirsty enemies, and put them to flight by one weapon,—the image of the Crucified.

2. *Apostolic charity.*

a. He loved God above all things, so that he was justified in saying: "The charity of Christ presseth us." (II Cor. v, 14.) He manifested his love of God by continual prayer and aspirations, one of which was: "O most blessed Trinity!" His zeal for the honor of God could not be satiated by even more than human labors, nor by stupendous conversions. Even when dying, he had his eyes turned toward the Chinese Empire, burning with desire for its conversion to the faith.

b. He loved his fellow-men so ardently that his entire life is a proof thereof. His zeal made him often forget, for several successive days, to take the necessary nourishment. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13.

Do we avoid at least grave offences against Christian charity? Have we not urgent reason to blush with shame when we behold the picture of St. Francis? How will it be at the Last Judgment?

III. ST. FRANCIS PERFORMED THE LABORS OF AN APOSTLE.

1. *Among Christians*,—in Venice, Rome, Lisbon, Mozambique, Goa, etc.,—he endeavored to confirm their faith, to extirpate vices and scandals, to promote virtue and godliness. Especially edifying was his apostolic manner of commencing his missions with teaching the children, whom he convoked by the sound of a little bell, to instruct them in the doctrines of faith, and through them to convert their parents; an undertaking so acceptable to God that the power of working miracles was transferred from St. Francis to the children. Thus in St. Francis was fulfilled what the Evangelist says concerning the Apostles: "They going forth preached everywhere; the Lord co-operating with them, and confirming the word with signs that followed." Mk. xvi, 20.

2. *Among the Gentiles*,—in the East Indies, in the extended kingdom of Japan, where he not only introduced the Christian religion, but also led its adherents to perfection. In the evening of his life he pointed out to his associates the way to the Chinese Empire, where he had hoped to find the martyr's crown. We may apply to him the words of St. Ambrose: "What Pagan philosophy has devised is less than what this one man has done." St. Francis traveled more than 100,000 miles, mostly barefooted; he preached the Gospel in more than one hundred kingdoms and islands; he baptized with his own hands over 200,000 men. Thus he could say with the Apostle: "You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." I Cor. ix, 2.

Peroration: As for us, let us bear in mind the word of the Apostle: "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings." II Cor. ix, 6. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves." Ps. cxxv, 5. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." John xv, 5.

P. A. Scherer.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

VII.

THE PICTURE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

You all know the picture of the Immaculate Conception. The design of sacred pictures is to represent to our eyes the mysteries of our faith. For this reason it is expedient for the priest to explain to the faithful the pictorial representations of religious truths. Let us then with this design direct our eyes to the picture of the Immaculate Conception. It calls to our mind

I. MYSTERIES OF FAITH.

1. *The mystery of the lapse of mankind* in the man and woman—of orginal sin—is represented by the Serpent holding the forbidden fruit in its mouth and winding itself around the entire globe.

a. Natural reason endeavored to investigate this mystery, but in vain. The ancient nations had an inadequate idea of this source of the many evils that befall mankind. Glimpses and memories of this sad knowledge had been transmitted down to them from Paradise.

b. Only revelation teaches us the whole truth. It says, that "by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned;" and that "by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners." Rom. v, 12, 19.

The doctrine of "original sin" is the fundamental mystery of all revelation, which stands or falls with it.

2. *The mystery of Redemption*, intimated by the Virgin's crushing the head of the Serpent.

a. Divine justice required the punishment of sin. Gen. iii, 14.

b. Divine mercy decreed to pardon the sin. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed:

she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Gen. iii, 15. Of Mary was born Jesus, who is called Christ. Mt. i, 16. This wonderful woman is called (Isai. vii, 14,) *the Virgin*, who shall conceive and bear a son; and his name shall be called Emmanuel. Isai. vii, 14.

We must firmly believe this mystery. For he who does not believe that Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and that he is the Son of God, "is already judged, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John iii, 18.

3. *The mystery of the Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin Mary, intimated also by the Virgin's crushing the head of the Serpent.

Pope Pius IX. declared this doctrine to be a dogma of faith. This dogma comprises the following truths:

a. The Blessed Virgin was never for a moment contaminated with original sin.

b. The only cause of this privilege is a special divine grace.

c. This grace was granted to the Blessed Virgin in view of the future merits of Christ, the Redeemer of mankind.

II. MORAL DOCTRINES.

The picture of the Immaculate Conception teaches us to resist the devil, the world, and flesh:

1. *Resist the devil.*

The devil entices us to adhere to the world and its allurements. "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in high places." Eph. vi, 12. Like Mary, let us crush the head of the Serpent: "Be sober, and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith." I Pet. v, 8.

b. Resist the world.

The riches and honors of the world entice man to sin.

Trample them under your feet, as Mary tramples the changeable moon under her feet. All temporal and changeable goods should serve you as a means of obtaining everlasting glory. "It remaineth, that they who use this world, be as if they used it not: for the figure of this world passeth away." I Cor. vii, 31.

c. Resist your own flesh.

It is the associate of our external enemies. Mary has on her head a crown of stars, because her love and longing were directed heavenward. If we overcome our own passions, we shall be crowned with her. "For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." II Tim. ii, 5. Therefore "be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Apoc. ii, 10.

2. *To strive for chastity, innocence, and devotion.*

a. Learn ye, O virgins, from this picture to love chastity and virginity. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and with men." Wisd. iv, 1. Follow me, Mary says to you. She is your queen. She was the first to put on the virginal garment under a vow; and under her lily sceptre thousands and thousands are gathered together.

b. Preserve and protect your innocence, says this picture to the innocent, and to all those to whose protection they are trusted, especially parents. The father of Origen kissed the breast of his little son, "because," he said, "it is a living sanctuary of the Holy Ghost." Oh! that all parents would look upon their children with the same reverence!

c. Preserve the spirit of prayer, says the Madonna with her hands lifted heavenward, prayer being the safeguard of innocence. "The virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit." I Cor. vii, 34.

3. The violet color of our Lady's garment reminds us of humility, the foundation of all virtue.

a. Humility is the principal feature in the life of Mary. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Lk. i, 38. This was her language, when she was exalted to the highest dignity. "He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid." "He hath ex-

alted the humble." Her whole life is an evidence of the word: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6.

b. Let us also put on the garment of humility, in order to preserve the virtue of chastity. Let us be humble in our charitable works. If we once appear before God in this garment, he will put on our head the starry crown of eternal glory.

Peroration: I wish to God, I could induce you often to kneel down, and say fervent prayers, before the picture of the Immaculate Conception. Our Lady takes a delight to be honored in this picture, as so many graces bestowed by the medal of the Immaculate Conception evidently prove. Preserve a firm faith in the mysteries of which this sacred picture reminds you; and exercise the virtues to which it exhorts you; and you will, under Mary's protection, obtain the crown of life everlasting.

F. X. Massl.

VIII.

DUTY TO LEAD AN IMMACULATE LIFE.

The Blessed Virgin was never contaminated with sin, even not with the original sin of the race. From this it appears how much God hates sin. It was, however, not in our power to be exempt from Adam's sin; but after being cleansed from this sin, it ever was, and is, our stern duty to lead an immaculate life. This duty is imposed on us for the following reasons:

I. WE WERE BORN AGAIN, AND CLEANSED FROM ALL STAIN OF SIN.

1. By the baptism of water we were freed from all sin.

a. Arguments. This effect was *first* promised by the prophets. "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will cleanse you from all your idols." Ezech. xxxvi, 25. Cf. Zach. xiii, 1. It was *secondly* announced by the Apostles. "Do penance, and be bap-

tized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins." Act ii, 38. Cf. Eph. v, 36. Col. ii, 13.

b. Corollary. The sins are taken away from us, that henceforth we may lead an immaculate life. "We are buried together with him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." Rom. vi, 4.

2. By the baptism of penance we are again cleansed from our sins.

a. Argument. Holy Scripture says of John the Baptist, that he was preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. Mk. i, 4. Peter and Mary Magdalene obtained remission of their sins in consequence of their penance.

b. Corollary. The debtor ought to love his creditor in proportion to the debt released. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, when he forgave her sins: "Sin no more." Whoever, after receiving the Sacrament of penance, plunges himself into his old sins again, with him the last things will be worse than the first.

II. WE ARE EVER EXHORTED BY THE HOLY GHOST TO LEAD AN IMMACULATE LIFE.

In order to guard men from sin, the Holy Ghost sends

1. *Remorse of conscience to the sinner.* It is intended by it to convert the greatest sinners. Cain was not forthwith killed on account of his murder, but should have been moved to penance by finding no rest on earth. Joseph's brothers were truly converted by the afflictions caused through their own guilt. Gen. xlii, 21. David had no peace for his bones, because of his sins. Even Judas was visited with stings of conscience, before he took his own life.

2. *Consolation to the just.* In order to recompensate them for the pleasures of sin, the Holy Ghost sends them peace and joy that surpasseth all understanding. He recompensated St. Paul for his many sufferings, for he himself says: "I am filled

with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation." II Cor. vii, 4.

3. *Abundant grace to every Christian.* "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and unspotted in his sight in charity." Eph. i, 4. "The charity of God is poured out into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." Rom. v, 5. We have been chosen children of God; the charity of God is given to us, that we should be holy, as God is holy.

III. NOTHING DEFILED CAN ENTER HEAVEN.

If you will enter life, beware of all contamination: for all impurity excludes from heaven.

1. *The hereditary impurity.* "Death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." Rom. v, 12. "We were by nature children of wrath even as the rest." Eph. ii, 3. And: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John iii, 5.

2. *The impurity of others*, if contracted through your cooperation. As Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land on account of his people (Deut. i, 37), so we may be prevented from entering heaven through having been accessory to another's sins. "Be ye therefore not partakers with them." Eph. v, 7. "Be not partaker of other men's sins." I Tim. v, 22.

3. *Personal impurity.* "There shall not enter into the City of Jerusalem anything defiled, nor any one that worketh abomination, or a lie; but they who are written in the book of the life of the Lamb." Apoc. xxi, 27. "For know ye this, and understand, that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person, which is a serving of idols, hath any inheritance of the kingdom of Christ, and of God." Eph. v, 5.

Peroration: You are convinced of our strict duty to walk before God in purity. Remember the command of the Holy Church at your baptism, to carry the garment of innocence before the tribunal of Christ. Remember the demand of God: "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices

from my eyes; cease to do perversely." Isai. i, 16. Remember the assertion of Jesus, that nothing defiled shall enter heaven; and act accordingly. Thus you will venerate the Blessed Virgin in the right manner.

Tirinus.

Third Sunday of Advent.

VII.
HOMILY.

When the multitudes went into the desert to hear John preach and to be baptized by him, the Synedrium at Jerusalem sent messengers to ask him who he was. On this occasion we learn whom the Jews suspected John to be, and whom John himself claimed to be.

I. WHAT DID THE JEWS THINK OF JOHN?

They were inclined to take John either for the Christ, or for Elias, or for the prophet.

1. The Jews asked John: "Who art thou? And he confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ." From this answer it appears that the Jews suspected John to be the Christ, an opinion expressly recorded Lk. iii, 15: "People were of opinion, and all were thinking in their hearts of John, that perhaps he might be the Christ." This opinion was caused by the extraordinary circumstances of his birth, by his austere life, his powerful preaching, and, especially, by the circumstance, that the time had arrived when the prophecies concerning the time of the coming of the Saviour were to be fulfilled. The royal sceptre was taken away from Juda, king Herod being an Idumaean (Gen. xlix, 10). The seventy weeks of years had passed (Dan. ix, 24).

John "confessed and did not deny; and he confessed." This great emphasis is used by the Evangelist, in order to remind those disciples of John, who still would not give the preference

to Jesus, that their master himself had peremptorily denied that he was the Christ.

This answer is also a reprimand to the ambitious, who give glory to themselves, but not to God; and to impenitent sinners, who, in their own opinion, are not in need of a Saviour.

2. "And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not." The Jews knew from Mal. iv, 6 that Elias, who had gone into heaven in a fiery chariot, would return "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Seeing the austerity of John, which might be well compared with the austerity admired in Elias, they thought that he perhaps might be this great prophet. But John said, he was not Elias. Yet, as for zeal, mission, and spirit, John was another Elias, wherefore the Archangel Gabriel and Jesus himself called him so. Lk. i, 17. Mt. xi, 14.

We did not hear St. John, nor are we likely to hear the preaching of Elias. Yet we know, what the one has preached, and the other is to preach: "Bring forth fruit worthy of penance." (Mt. iii, 8.)

3. The third question of the Jews was this: "Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No." It seems that amongst the Jews the opinion prevailed, that Jeremias the prophet, the intercessor for the people, (II Mach. xv, 4) and the watchman of the sacred vessels, (II Mach. ii, 5) would also return before the coming of the Messias (Mt. xvi, 14). St. John denied himself to be this prophet.

If our fellow-men take us for good Christians, let us after the example of the holy Precursor say: We are not. Let us never deny that we are men subject to frailty, and, especially in the confessional, let us never be ashamed to confess our sins and trespasses.

II. WHAT DOES JOHN SAY OF HIMSELF?

As John unambiguously declared that he was not he whom the Jews took him to be, the priests and Levites said to him: "Who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent

us! what sayest thou of thyself?" Now mark the answer of John. He claims to be nothing more than (1) the precursor of Jesus Christ, and (2) his unworthy minister.

1. John said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as said the prophet Isaias. In these words of the prophet Isaias (iv, 3) the mission of St. John is sufficiently expressed. He calls himself a voice; he could have called himself an angel; for as such he had been foretold by the prophet Malachias (iii, 1). He gives all glory to the Lord, whose way he prepares.

Let us learn from the example of this Saint not to seek our glory in our works.—Recognize in the minister of the Gospel the voice of the Lord; and ye children, obey in your parents the voice of Jesus Christ.—Ye all, listen in this time of Advent to the voice of the Church: "Prepare the way of the Lord."

2. "And they asked him and said to him: Why then doest thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not," etc. The Pharisees inferred from Ezech. xxxvi, 25 and Zach. xiii, 1, that no one had a right to baptize the children of Israel but the Messias. John answers them that his baptism is not at all the baptism to be administered by the Messias, who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Lk. iii, 16); that his baptism is only to symbolize the necessary purification of heart, and the necessity of penance.

And that the Jews might know who He is who will administer the true baptism, he says, that He has stood in the midst of them; that He is preferred before him; the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to loose. St. John does not deem himself worthy to bestow upon Jesus the service of a slave, the disparity being unlimited.

Behold a model of true humility. This virtue is founded upon the knowledge of God and of our own selves. Whoever reflects on the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Who art thou, O

Lord; and who am I?" he will soon become convinced, that humility is demanded of us by our very nature.

"These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing." On this same spot Josue, the figure of Jesus Christ, had led the people of God across the Jordan; that they might take possession of the promised land. Jesus had been baptized on the same place, in order to lead his people, who are entitled to heaven by baptism, into the eternal land of promise. As the prophet of old sent Naaman into the Jordan to be cleansed, so the Church invites her children during the time of Advent to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin by the sacrament of penance.

VIII.

THE PICTURE OF ST. BARBARA.

"Who shall find a valiant woman?" Prov. xxxi, 10. Valor is expected of a man, not of a woman. Therefore Holy Scripture says, that a valiant woman is not easily found, and that her worth surpasses the most precious pearls. "Who shall find a valiant woman? far, and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her." Prov. xxxi, 10. The Christian religion has, however, brought forth a vast number of true heroines; on whom it is instructive for everyone to turn his spiritual eyes. Among others our Holy Church has, in this month of December, commemorated the martyrdom of St. Barbara, Virgin and Martyr, who is one of the most popular Saints. Her picture is familiar to you: a lonely tower on her side; a sword in her left hand; a chalice and the Sacred Host in her right hand. Let us reflect on this picture.

I. THE TOWER ON HER SIDE.

1. *It reminds us of her vocation to the faith.*

a. At the time of Julius Verus Maximinus Cæsar (230-238) there lived in Nicomedia a man of high rank, full of hatred of Christianity. His name was Dioscorus. He had an only

daughter of charming beauty and strong mind. In order to keep her from all society with Christians, he had her secluded in a lonely tower which he had built for the purpose. Here, in her forced solitude, she gave herself to prayer and study in search of divine truth. God rewarded her with the gift of faith. She then contrived to receive instruction and baptism by stealth from a Christian priest.

b. How wonderful are the ways of Divine Providence! No tyrant is powerful enough to seclude a soul from the knowledge and service of God. "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before him: for he doth according to his will, as well with the powers of heaven, as among the inhabitants of the earth: and there is none that can resist his hand, and say to him: Why hast thou done it?" Dan. iv, 32. Beware therefore of laying obstacles in the way of the Lord, if he calls your son or your daughter to his exclusive service!

2. *It reminds us of her strength in the faith.*

a. The tower, a bulwark against enemies, is a symbol of strength. Firm like an invincible tower was the faith of St. Barbara. Her own father tried every means to shake her faith, but in vain.

b. Let us learn from this tender virgin to be strong in faith. "The true believer ought to be like an anvil." St. Ephrem. The world with its revilings and blasphemies is ever intent upon destroying our faith. "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; do manfully; and be strengthened." I Cor. xvi, 13.

II. THE SWORD IN HER LEFT HAND.

1. *By the sword her earthly life terminated.*

a. Dioscorus, on discovering his daughter's conversion, was beside himself with rage. Her own father denounced her before the civil tribunal. Martinian the Governor ordered Barbara to be terribly tortured several times, and as often did God miraculously heal her wounds. At last she was beheaded, her own father, merciless to the last, acting as her executioner. Thus St. Barbara ended her temporal life under the sword, having scarcely attained the twentieth year of her age.

b. How stupendous was the sacrifice made by the Saint for the honor of God! "I esteem all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." Phil. iii, 8. Cf. Rom. viii, 35.—What sacrifices do you make for God? God demands of you that you keep holy his Day, and you refuse to do it. God demands of you that you renounce all unjust accumulations of wealth, and you refuse to do it. God demands of you that you forgive your enemy, and you refuse it. God demands of you that you avoid all proximate occasions of sin, and you refuse to do it. What if the sword of the executioner should put your love for Jesus to the test?

2. *By the sword celestial life was imparted to her.*

a. On the place of execution Barbara sacrificed her life. The spectators looked upon it as a folly. But her soul was borne by angels to Paradise, where she heard the voice of her Bridegroom saying: "Come from Libanus, my spouse; come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned." Cant. iv, 8. And the Heavenly Father placed a double crown on her head: the crown of virginity, and the crown of martyrdom. Thus the sword of the tyrant had been to her an instrument of great blessing.

b. God rewards exceedingly whatever sacrifice we make for him: "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18. God has provided that along the path of our life thorns and briars should grow as so many swords. "There are some that day and night take no sleep with their eyes." Eccle. viii, 16. "All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II Tim. iii, 12. Man has to carry the sword against himself, against his own passions. Col. iii, 5. Accept at the hand of God all sufferings, and combat against thy own carnal self, and thou shalt earn life everlasting.

III. THE CHALICE AND THE SACRED HOST IN HER RIGHT HAND.

1. *It reminds us of her love for the Blessed Sacrament.*

a. Holy Eucharist is the centre of Christian life, the source of all consolation and holy joys. St. Barbara bore the tenderest love to the Blessed Sacrament, and whenever opportunity offered, she received the Bread of Angels with ardent desire. This divine mystery caused her to make the resolution to live and die a virgin. The prophet Zacharias calls the Blessed Sacrament the corn of the Elect, and the wine springing forth virgins. By this mystery St. Barbara gained strength for combating against enraged Paganism, and enduring the most violent death. "No one can be fit for martyrdom unless the Church has armed him with the Body and Blood of Christ; and that soul faints which the reception of the Eucharist has not made strong and inflamed." St. Cyprian.

b. Would that all of us also entertained a burning love for the Blessed Sacrament! It is an object infinitely worthy of our love. O that we would frequently receive Holy Communion! Then we should be enabled to "fight a good fight" (II Tim. iv, 7), and subdue all our enemies.

2. *We are reminded of her being the patroness of a good death.*

a. Ever since the earliest ages St. Barbara has been venerated and invoked as the patroness of a good death, by obtaining for her clients the blessing of the Sacraments at that last hour. St. Stanislas Kostka was communicated by angels through invoking her name; and Surius tells a story of a young man in Holland who, in 1448, awoke suddenly at night to find himself enveloped in flames. In agony of mind and body, he called upon St. Barbara; she appeared in answer to his prayer, threw her mantle round the scorched youth, and kept life and strength within him until he had received the Viaticum and last anointing, when he tranquilly expired.

b. How great a consolation for us! We hope, when our last hour approaches, that then the Prince of peace will come to visit us, and make his Pasch with us, so that we may calmly say with Simeon embracing the divine Infant: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace." Let

us often pray against a sudden and unprovided death; and, above all, let us daily invoke St. Barbara, that we may be fortified by the Holy Viaticum against the dangers of our last hour. Meanwhile let us provide for the household of our soul.

J. Schuen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

VII.

HOMILY.

The birth-day of our Saviour being near at hand, the Church, in her sacred liturgy, gives vent to her ardent longing for the coming of the divine Infant child in the most forcible and touching language. In the *Introit* of Holy Mass she repeats the *Rorate* of Isaias the prophet: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." For the time is approaching, when "the land that was desolate shall be glad; and the wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise: the glory of Libanus is given to it, the beauty of Carmel, and Saron; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God." (Isai. xxxv, 1.) What wonder, if the Church makes a last effort to move her children to penance by introducing St. John, the preacher of penance in the wilderness, that by following his exhortations they may present themselves with a cleansed heart before the Manger of our Saviour. Let us then in explanation of to-day's Gospel regard the time when, and the place where, John commenced his divine mission, and listen to his preaching.

I. THE TIME AND PLACE.

1. *Regarding the time*, the Evangelist says: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of

Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high-priests Annas and Caiphas, the word of the Lord was made unto the son of Zachary, in the desert." The Evangelist gives, with the accuracy of a historian, the time when John commenced to preach. The words of St. Luke, who wrote his Gospel about thirty years after the above event, are also an implicit appeal to the testimony of eyewitnesses who had seen and heard John the Baptist. But no one ever doubted the historical facts related in the Gospel, until some of our modern unbelievers made themselves ridiculous by doing so.

The Evangelist records the beginning of John's mission:

a. With reference to the reign of Tiberius the Roman Cæsar; for since the birth of John which was assigned to the reign of King Herod (Lk. i, 5), the Jews had no longer their own kings, Judea having been incorporated into the Roman dominion, and added as a portion to the Syrian province, so that the sceptre was taken away from Juda. Gen. xlix, 10.

b. With reference to the time when Pontius Pilate, who was subordinated to the Prefect of Syria, was governor of Judea, in the third year.

c. With reference to the tetrarchs between whom the former dominion of Herod, the murderer of Bethlehem's children, was divided.

d. With reference to those who by that time held the office of high-priests, Annas and Caiphas, who had probably bought from the Romans the permission to perform the functions of a high-priest alternately.

It is evident from these dates, that John had attained the thirtieth year of his life, when he commenced preaching. For he was born in the forty-second year of the reign of Cæsar Augustus, who reigned fifty-seven years. Cæsar Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius Cæsar, so that in the fifteenth year of the reign of the latter John the Baptist was thirty years old.

St. John prepared himself in the solitude of the desert, during thirty years, for his holy vocation, a reprimand for all those young men who pretend to teach before they have learned; whose character is offensive because of their pride.

2. *With reference to the mission itself*, John received it *in the desert.* "The word of the Lord was made unto John the son of Zachary, in the desert." In the desert he had lived from his childhood, separated not only from human society, but also, by his austere mortification, from his own self. In what manner is our youth prepared for the serious vocation of life? What wonder if they remain children all their lifetime?—We all, if we desire to hear the voice of God, should live spiritually in the desert, by reflecting frequently on God and his perfections, and by remembering the presence of Him who sees all things.

II. THE MANNER OF HIS PREACHING.

1. John exhorted his hearers to do penance. "And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins." The baptism administered by St. John is commonly called baptism of penance, because by virtue thereof sins were not remitted; but it was only a solemn consecration for a penitent life, and a preparation for the baptism of Jesus Christ with water and the Holy Ghost.

2. As regards the substance of St. John's preaching, it was taken from Isai. xl, 3. When a king is to come into a country, the ways are prepared, every valley being filled, and every mountain and hill being brought low. We have the more reason to do the same, since the King of kings is coming into our hearts.

"*Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*" Behold the relation between divine grace and our own free will. Without any merits on our part, God calls on us by his grace to become converted. Then it is our duty to correspond with the divine call by our free co-operation, and remove all obstacles, thus preparing the way in which the Lord is to come to us.

"*Every valley shall be filled.*" What are the valleys that obstruct the way of the Lord? (*a.*) The abyss of sensual passions, especially impurity and intemperance, in consequence of which man is degraded, and a great chaos established between God and him. (*b.*) Neglect of the duties of our state of life. (*c.*) Despondency, which is one of the greatest obstacles to salvation, wherefore the portion of the fearful shall be in the pool burning

with fire and brimstone. Apoc. xxi, 8. "The devil fears nothing more than determined souls." St. Teresa. (*d.*) Sloth, the greatest of all obstacles.

"*Every mountain and hill shall be brought low.*" These mountains and hills are: (*a.*) Pride in its various forms. Unless we become as children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. (*b.*) Avarice, which delights in heaps of money.

"*The crooked shall be made straight.*" God does not come to us by crooked ways; we must be sincere and honest, especially in the confessional.

"*The rough ways shall be made plain.*" In order that a perfect union with Jesus may be established, we must also remove smaller faults. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." Ecclus. xix, 1.

"*And all the flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" All those who prepare their hearts for the coming of the Lord, shall participate of the fruit of salvation through Jesus Christ. We shall feel his sweet presence in our souls on Christmas day, if we prepare his way by penance in the confessional.

VIII.

(*St. Thomas, the Apostle.*)

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH.

"Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God." John xx, 28. When Thomas, putting his finger into the wounds of the Lord, became convinced of the truth of the resurrection he adored his Master saying: My Lord, and my God. Thenceforth he was a faithful disciple of Christ, a strenuous herald of the Gospel. In the city of Meliapore in India he died a martyr for the faith. How great would be our happiness if we followed St. Thomas in the firmness of faith which he displayed during all the time of his apostleship. In order to strengthen our faith, let us reflect to-day on the foundation thereof.

I. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IS IMMOVABLE.

Our faith is founded

1. *On divine authority.*

a. God has spoken to mankind *first* in the Old Testament. In Paradise he promised a Redeemer. Gen. iii, 15. Thereby the foundation-stone of our holy faith was laid, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." Eph. ii, 20. At later periods God spoke repeatedly, and more distinctly, to mankind. He chose the Israelitic people with whom to deposit his revelation. For the same purpose he instituted sacrifices and sacred rites. At last the word of the Lord came unto the prophets. "God hath spoken on divers occasions, and many ways, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets." Heb. i, 1. The image of the future Redeemer was disclosed more and more.

b. God has completed his revelation in the New Testament.

"Last of all, in these days he hath spoken to us by his Son." Heb. i, 2. During the three years of his public life the Son of God made known to men the will of his Heavenly Father. "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth." Mt. xxii, 16.—By his miracles and prophecies he proved his divine mission.—When about to leave the world, he placed the Gospel as a divine deposit into the hands of the Apostles. Therefore St. Paul says: "We are ambassadors for Christ, God as it were exhorting by us." II Cor. v, 20.

Thus the foundation of our faith cannot be shaken, it being the authority of the truthful and holy God. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word shall not pass away." Mt. xxiv, 35.

2. *On the authority of the Church.*

a. The Church has been commissioned to teach all nations.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." Mt. xxviii, 19. The

Apostles were ever intent upon preaching the Gospel, and appointed successors with the commission to hand the divine doctrine from generation to generation. "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine." II Tim. iv, 2. Accordingly the Church —the Pope with the bishops—is the teacher of our faith.

b. The Church is endowed with infallibility.

If God appointed the Church to teach the nations, it follows that he provided for her the means to teach the truth, and nothing but the truth. The infallibility of the Church is also clearly deduced from Holy Scripture, as from Mt. xvi, 18; xxviii, 20; John xiv, 16; I Tim. iii, 15. Hence the Church may apply to herself the word of St. Paul: "Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Gal. i, 8.

Consequently, our faith rests on the most solid foundation; it is not a blind faith, but a reasonable service to God. Our religion is not built upon sand, but upon a rock, "that we may not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." Eph. iv, 14.

II. THE SOLIDITY OF OUR FAITH IS A GREAT CONSOLATION.

1. *In the tribulations of life.*

The conviction that our faith is divine quiets our mind

a. When we are tempted with doubts.

Our faith teaches many doctrines which we are not able to comprehend. "We see now through a glass in an obscure manner." I Cor. xiii, 12. This is the cause of doubts arising in our mind. These doubts are often nourished by persons the society of whom we cannot avoid. But the certainty that "the word of the Lord is right" (Ps. xxxii, 4) and that my faith rests on divine authority, dissipates every doubt.

b. When we are visited with afflictions.

In the hour of affliction man stretches forth his hand to seize wherewithal to support himself. This support is our holy faith, which gives to all who suffer promises full of consolation.

"Your sorrows shall be turned into joy." John xvi, 20. "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life." James i, 12.

c. When we are tormented by our sins.

Sin lies as a heavy weight upon the human soul. Only faith can take away the burden. "The Lord is patient and full of mercy, taking away iniquity and wickedness." Numb. xiv, 18. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." I John i, 7. How great a consolation to know that these promises are true, because they come from God!

2. *In the anguish of death.*

Human misery reaches its summit at the hour of death. Eternity depends on this hour. "*Amara mors*" (I King xv, 32). The conviction of our faith being well-founded affords a sweet consolation; for it is in this faith that the dying Christian sees the glimpse of a better world shining upon him. "The just shall live for evermore; and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord." Wisd. v, 16. Therefore the dying Christian, who dies in the Lord, leaves this world with resignation, nay, sometimes with joy.

Peroration: What are the inferences to be drawn from the above truths? (*a.*) Let us return sincere thanks for the grace of our faith. Millions do not possess it. "Give thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light." Col. i, 12. (*b.*) Let us cling to this faith. When doubts cross our mind, or mockeries of religion provoke them in our soul, let us say with the Apostle: "I am not confounded. For I know whom I have believed." II Tim. i, 12. (*c.*) Let us conscientiously observe what our faith demands of us. We are called to live a holy life, "not conformed to the former desires." I Pet. i, 14. If we fulfill these conditions, faith will confer upon us the sweetest consolation here below, and eternal alvation.

J. Schuen.

Christmas Day.

VII.

HOMILY ON THE FIRST GOSPEL.

To-day our hearts are filled with celestial joy, because on this day the true Life was born for us. The Angels of the Lord also summoned the Shepherds to be glad and rejoice, saying: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." Lk. ii, 10. Let us then in the joy of our hearts nourish our souls with what the Evangelist St. Luke relates to us respecting the birth of Jesus Christ, as he had heard it from the Blessed Virgin Mary. His Gospel relates (1) the preparatory circumstances which preceded the birth of Jesus Christ, (2) the circumstances which surrounded it, and (3) its announcement.

I. THE PREPARATORY CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PRECEDED THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

1. The decree of Cæsar Augustus, issued for the purpose of assessing the poll tax, was the external occasion of fulfilling the prophecy of Micheas iii, 5. "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel, and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."—Thus man has to co-operate, sometimes even unknowingly, in fulfilling the divine decrees.

2. This decree went forth at a *time of profound peace*, when the temple of Janus was closed the second time during the reign of Augustus. Jesus is the *Prince of peace* (Isai. ix, 6); and universal peace was, to the Jews, one of the signs of the coming Messias, according to Isai. ii, 4: "And in the last days * * * they shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war." The Saviour ap-

peared when the world was in peace, (*a*) because he was to establish his kingdom in truth and grace; and (*b*) because the Lord never enters a human heart where peace does not reign. Therefore "seek after peace, and pursue it." Ps. xxxiii, 15. "Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor and blasphemy be taken away from you, with all malice." Eph. iv, 31.

3. "And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city." Hereby the Jews acknowledged themselves as subjects of Gentiles—of the Romans—and were reminded of the prophecy of Jacob, (Gen. xlix, 10) which was therein fulfilled.

The names of the Jews were enrolled so that they professed themselves to be under the Roman subjection. The name of Jesus was also enrolled, as Justin and Tertullian say, because he desired to be under subjection on earth, that he might write our names in the *Book of Life;* and to make himself the slave of the mighty on earth, in order to elevate us to the dignity of free citizens of heaven.

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH SURROUNDED THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

"And it came to pass that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

1. Joseph and Mary, by obeying the pagan magistrate, set before us an example of true humility and civil obedience.—In Mary, who shared the hardships in the life of Joseph, and made a journey of about four days, married women ought to admire her tender love for her husband, and imitate her in this regard also.

2. "She brought forth her first-born son." O blessed night, foretold in Paradise, longed for by the Patriarchs and Prophets! O night in which the Light rose that enlightens the whole world!—Mary brought forth her *first-born* son—first-born! as

though He were not her only Son, for we too, if we hear the word of God, and do it (Lk. viii, 21), are Mary's children through membership of the body of her only-begotten Son Jesus.

3. "There was no room for them in the inn." How true is the word: "He came unto his own; and his own received him not!"

a. The Holy Church seeks a place for Jesus in the hearts of men; but how many are there who have no room for Him!

b. Do not trust too much in your own flesh and blood, in your family or connections. Take counsel of God himself about your spiritual affairs; and if you intend to perform a charitable work for the honor of God, leave it not to the good will of your relations.

4. "She wrapped him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger."

a. The swaddling-clothes and the manger—what else do they teach but humility? They partake, however, as it were, of the immortality of Jesus Christ, being the object of tender veneration of the faithful up to our days.

b. As Mary herself wrapped her Child up in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, it is insinuated, that she, as she conceived him without lust, so also brought him forth without suffering; that was reserved for the hour of his death on the Cross.—Who is able to describe her sentiments when she, for the first time, beheld in her arms the Divine Child! According to a beautiful tradition she exclaimed, enraptured with celestial joy: "My God, my Lord, and my Son," kissing at the first word his feet, at the second, his hands, at the third, his face. O Mother of God, happy because thou hast borne the Son of God, thrice happy because thou hast loved him with ineffable love, implore for us one ray of that heavenly love with which thy heart was burning.

III. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

"And there were in the same country shepherds watching,

and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold, an Angel of the Lord stood by them; and the brightness of God shone round about them: and they feared with a great fear."

1. The good tidings of great joy were brought, first of all, to poor people. The poor are the children of his predilection. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: wherefore he hath anointed me; to preach the Gospel to the poor he sent me." Lk. iv, 18. Jesus Christ cannot dwell with us unless we become poor in spirit, having our hearts detached from earthly possessions, and acknowledging our absolute need of a Redeemer.

2. Angels sing the praises of Him who was born in a stable—among animals.—Angels are the natural ministers and messengers of God, and therefore the ministers of the Son of God, whom they accompanied during his whole earthly life, and whom they glorified visibly at the most important epochs of his life. They glorified both his Manger and his Sepulchre; they administered to him in the desert, and comforted him in his agony.

3. The Angel of the Lord is, according to an old tradition, the Archangel Gabriel, who had brought to Mary and to Joseph the message of the Incarnation. The brightness of God, a celestial splendor, an image of the Light that shineth in darkness, shone round about them. "And they feared with a great fear." This fear was holy reverence, caused in them by the conviction of their own humbleness, and of the greatness of God.—Besides man, in consequence of sin, is naturally inclined to fear the presence of a spiritual being, of God or his angels. The first indication of this fear was in Paradise itself. Amongst the Jews it was a general conviction, that to see God or an Angel was to die.

4. "Fear not," etc. This the first word addressed to mankind in the New Covenant. "For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The birth of the Saviour is the greatest joy of mankind. For it "shall be to all the people." As sin and its curse was universal, so the benediction is universal also. "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men." Titus ii, 11.

5. "For this day is born to you a Saviour." However poor and naked our souls may be, let us rejoice, because our Saviour is born for them; he is able to heal all their infirmities. The Manger and the swaddling clothes were to be the signs by which to discern the Messias. For if he was to be the Saviour who descended from heaven to deliver the world from sin, he had, by his own example, to denounce the treble concupiscence.

6. "Glory to God in the highest." These words express the last and supreme end of this sublimest mystery--the glory and honor of God. Man was excluded from the society of Holy Angels, who incessantly sing their *Sanctus*. By the Incarnation the glory of God was restored among men.—"And on earth peace to men of good will,"—"because in him it hath well pleased that all fulness should dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his Cross." Col. i, 19. The Divine Child restored peace with God, with our fellow-creatures, (angels and men,) and with ourselves; but only if we are of good will, if our will is in conformity with the will of God.

May the Divine Jesus on this blessed day pour out his sweet and holy peace into restless souls; and where it reigns, preserve it, until we rest in eternal peace!

VIII.

HOMILY ON THE THIRD GOSPEL.

The Gospel which I have just read to you is commonly called the Gospel of St. John, because with these words St. John commenced his Gospel. It was ever held in great veneration, and Pope St. Pius V. prescribed to have it read at the close of Holy Mass. The end to be obtained by the holy Evangelists in writing the Gospels was to convince the world of the truth, that Jesus of Nazareth is not only man, but also God. St. John, the *Eagle* among the Evangelists, at once tells us of the eternal origin of his Divine Master, saying in plain words that he is God.

Then he informs us of the temporal birth of the Word, thus speaking to us of both His divine and human nature.

I. THE DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST.

St. John means by "The Word" Jesus Christ, whom he claims to be true God.

1. The *Word* is Jesus Christ, as is manifest from the Gospel in general, and from John i, 14-18 in particular. He is called so because he is the perfect substantial image of the Father. As the word which we speak, is the expression of our thought, so the Son of God is the expression of the substance of the Father. And as we communicate ourselves to our fellowmen by means of the words we speak, so the Father speaks to mankind through his Son.

2. St. John asserts that this Word is true God. "In the beginning was the Word." The Word was before heaven and earth were. He was before angels and archangels. For all this *was made.* The Word was not made, but it *was.*

This Word was not something separate, or distinct, from God, but "*it was with God.*" Yet it was not the Father himself (*God* means *God the Father*), else it could not have been said to be *with God.* Still, although distinct from the Father, "the Word was God," i. e., a Divine Person distinct from the Father. The Word was, however, not without origin like the Father, but it had its origin from Him, the Word being "the only-begotten of the Father."

But that you may not suppose this Word, the God from God, to be separated from God, as a human son is separated from his father, the Evangelist adds: "The same was in the beginning *with God,*" or as he says a little later: "The only-begotten Son, who *is in the bosom of the Father.*" (Verse 18.)

3. After having established the relation between the Word and the Father, he next proceeds to inform us of his relation to created things. "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made." The Son together with the Father created the world, and all things, also you and me, where-

fore we ought to be thankful to him too for the benefit of creation.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." In the Word of God was absolute life, he was the Life. By the act of creation he gave life to every creature, and in a more perfect manner to man, to whom he imparted not only corporal life, but also spiritual life, Himself being the light of the human soul. For as no plant can grow when removed from the rays of the sun, so the human soul cannot live, either a natural or a supernatural life, without the Word of God.

"And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." The light has been shining in this sinful world during four thousand years, but the sinful world did not see the light, because it loved darkness rather than the light: "for their works were evil." (John iii, 19.) "That which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it to them. When they had known God, they have not glorified him as God, nor gave thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart became darkened." Rom. i, 19, 21.

But however great the ingratitude of men may have been, it was far surpassed by the charity of God. Through love for us the Word of God was made flesh, i. e., became man for us. This is the subject of the second part of to-day's Gospel.

II. THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Concerning the Incarnation the Evangelist speaks (1) of the testimony of John the Baptist; (2) of the truth of the Incarnation; (3) of the blessing resulting therefrom.

1. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him." A morning star was sent before the celestial Sun, to announce his coming. Although God did not need the testimony of men, yet he sent a witness for the sake of men. Therefore in contrast with Christ, who was the Word, St. John is expressly called a *man*, the more as some of his disciples took him for an angel, or for the Messias.

This man came for a witness. Is it not our vocation also to give testimony of the Light before the whole world? "And you shall give testimony because you are with me from the beginning." John xv, 27. We shall give testimony especially by a truly Christian life. "That all men might believe through him." If they did not, "neither God nor John were the cause; but it was the hard-heartedness of those who refused to accept the testimony." St. Cyril.

"He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light." This protestation is directed against those disciples of the Baptist, who would not admit the superiority of Jesus over their own master.—He was to give testimony of Jesus of whom he said: "Behold, the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world."

2. The Word was "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Jesus Christ, the spiritual Sun, enlightens all men by the rays both of natural reason and of faith. *This Son of God has become true man for us.* "He was in the world," etc., i. e., in the midst of men, but they knew him not. "He came unto his own," to his chosen people, but his own received him not. The Jews declared solemnly: "We will not have this man to reign over us." Lk. xix, 14.

Do not the words, "And his own received him not," apply to many of you also? Would that these would reflect how great blessings they reject by rejecting Jesus, and that they would bear in mind the dreadful punishment that avenged the unbelief and hard-heartedness of the Jews!

"And the Word was made flesh." Holy Scripture employs the word *flesh*, in order to intimate, that the Son of God took our nature in its lowness, with all its infirmities.—By adopting our flesh, Jesus obtained for us the grace to live a holy life in this our flesh, and to subdue our passions. "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that renouncing impurity, and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously, in this world." Titus ii, 11.

And dwelt among us. Not for a few moments, but for thirty-three years, the Son of God dwelt among men, as brother among brethren, conversing and eating with them, tempted in all things like as we are, that he might have compassion on our infirmities. Heb. iv, 15. He dwells still in our midst, in our tabernacles, in order to inspire us with confidence, and that the word might be fulfilled: "I will dwell in them and walk among them: and I will be their God; and they shall be my people." II Cor. vi, 16. Is Jesus justified in saying, that you, among whom he dwells, are his people? Do you love and obey him?

"And we saw his glory," etc., by his many miracles, his sublime doctrine, and his holy life, by which he manifested himself as the "only-begotten of the Father," distributing the abundance of grace, and teaching the highest truth.

3. The blessing resulting from the Incarnation of the Son of God consists in this that "as many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God." The adoption as sons of God comprises all other graces, of which it is the sum and crown. The Son of God would reserve nothing for himself, but that which he was of his own nature, he made us to be by grace—sons of God and co-heirs with himself. This regeneration of man is performed ordinarily by the holy sacraments of Baptism and of Penance. It is not dependent on our descent.

Let us then, on the birthday of our Saviour, remember our own spiritual birth; and whenever, bending our knees, we repeat the words: "And the Word was made flesh," let us also renew our resolution to live a life worthy of the children of God.

Sunday After Christmas.

VII.

HOMILY.

In to-day's Gospel we are introduced into the company of holy persons whose virtuous example we should follow—the just and devout Simeon, a pious widow called Anna, and the Holy Family. Let us, for our edification, meditate on these holy personages.

I. SIMEON THE JUST AND DEVOUT MAN.

1. Of Simeon Holy Scripture says: "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, named Simeon; and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms, and blessed God," etc. What Holy Scripture relates in the above words occurred six weeks after the birth of the Divine Child, when he was presented in the temple. The Holy Church intends to make us partake of the joy of these holy persons, by reminding us of what Jesus is to the good, and to the wicked, and to exhort Christian parents to hasten to present their little ones to the Lord.

2. "And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother." He blessed them, i. e., he called Mary and Joseph "blessed," on account of the singular grace imparted to them; and he implored God to protect them in order to fulfill faithfully their sublime duties towards the Child.—We should also rejoice at the grace imparted to our brethren, and pray to God, that they may employ the heavenly gift for the honor of God.

Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph; but when he prophesied, he addressed only Mary, because she was the true Mother of the

Child, and was to be the only witness of His cruel Passion and Death, as, according to the good pleasure of God, Joseph was to be taken out of this world before that time of sadness.

3. What did Simeon prophesy? He said to Mary the Mother of Jesus: "Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." Jesus was a sign, indeed, i. e., an extraordinary appearance commanding the attention of all. And the effect? Many in Israel hailed him as the salvation of Israel, and to them he was set for the resurrection. In their number were not only the innocent, but also great sinners. But the greater number o the Jews would not believe in him, but contradicted him, being scandalized by his humbleness; and to them he was set for temporal and eternal fall.

We witness the same in the life of the Church, which is a continuation of the life of Jesus on earth. Wherever the *sign* of redemption was planted in the land of the Gentiles, some o them found the resurrection and the light, whilst others were "drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Apoc. xvii, 6.) Nations which had been converted dared to contradict this sign, and they relapsed into slavery and barbarism. (Asia, Africa.) We witness the same now-a-days concerning individuals.

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Whatever Jesus suffered in his body, Mary suffered in her heart; for which reason the heart of the Mother of Sorrows is represented in Christian art as pierced with one or seven swords. The seven swords are to remind us of her seven sorrows with which her heart was pierced according to the prophecy of Simeon, by the flight into Egypt, by the loss of Jesus in the temple, by meeting him on his way to Calvary, by the death of Jesus, by his descent from the Cross, and by his sepulture.

"That out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." By the Sacred Passion the virtue and constancy of many was put to the test. It is by sufferings and tribulations that the thoughts of many are manifested, and will ever be manifested to the consummation of the world.

II. THE PROPHETESS ANNA.

1. Anna was a model for her sex, of whatever age or condi-

tion:—for virgins, because she had preserved her virginal dignity until she entered her married state. She had been a faithful wife to her husband, whom she loved, even after his death, so tenderly, that she refused to enter married life a second time. She was now a widow, and, as such, led an austere life, and sought her delight in the house of God. In consideration of her many virtues, God prolonged her life, that she might see and embrace the Saviour of the world.

"And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day." She was so frequently in the temple, that she seemed not to leave it at all. She served God by fastings and prayers, which she did not consider a superfluous mortification. As a reward God gave her the gift of prophecy.

Thanks be to God who does not suffer this spirit of mortification to die away in his Church; but, on the contrary, calls a great number of his children into the solitude of the cloisters and convents, that through their prayers and fastings the divine wrath enkindled against mankind may be appeased. "When Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame; but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame." Exodus xvii, 11.

2. "Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord." If she had not come at the same hour, she would not have seen the salvation of Israel. Divine grace has its days and hours. The hour of divine worship, of Confession and Communion, the hour of the sermon, are frequently the hours of special grace, the hours on which eternity depends.

"She spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel." If you love Jesus Christ, you will often think of him, and frequently speak of him, and especially endeavor to promote the knowledge of, and the love for him, in all those who are subject to your care.

III. THE HOLY FAMILY.

The Gospel speaks also of the Holy Family, of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

1. In the beginning of the Gospel we read: "Joseph, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning him." St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin knew by revelation that the Child Jesus was the Son of the Most High and the Saviour of the world. We admire their sacred silence in keeping secret whatever had been entrusted to them.

And if they were wondering, it was not at the things themselves, but at the things *being spoken* concerning him. They were with great reverence wondering at the bounty and kindness of God, who made known his grand design to pious souls in so admirable a manner.—Let us also, especially during Christmas-time, meditate on the Incarnation of our God: the more we meditate on this gracious mystery, the greater will be our admiration and devotion.

2. "And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their city Nazareth." Although not bound by the law of redeeming the first-born son, nor by the law of purification, the holy personages complied with its prescriptions, in order to set a good example before us, that we may do more for heaven than is absolutely necessary.—We learn from the above words also, that the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, before they fled into Egypt.

3. "And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in him." (*a.*) Jesus manifested his wisdom and grace, as he grew in years, thus, by His sacred example, instructing children in their duty of growing also continually in wisdom and grace. (*b.*) Jesus deigned to be a true child, with all the natural imperfections of childhood; a great honor and consolation for children, and an exhortation for every one of us to return to the innocence and simplicity of a child. "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. xviii, 3. (*c.*) Since Jesus sanctified childhood, children should devote to Jesus their privileged life; and parents should be anxious to lead their little ones to the Child Jesus. "Remember thy Creator in the

days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say: They please me not." Eccle. xii, 1. (*d.*) Jesus never ceased performing good works. There is no standstill in Christian perfection possible. Let us continually increase in the love of God, and in grace before God and men.

VIII.

THE THREE FESTIVAL DAYS AFTER CHRISTMAS.

The Holy Church celebrates immediately after Christmas the days of St. Stephen, Protomartyr, of St. John, Apostle, and of the holy Innocents. St. Stephen was the first to shed voluntarily his blood for Jesus Christ. St. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, to whose care he entrusted his own mother, and who wrote about the Son of God in the sublimest manner. The Bethlehemitic children were the first to shed their blood, although unknowingly, for Jesus Christ. It is with reason, therefore, that we celebrate the birthdays of St. Stephen, of St. John and of the Innocents immediately after the birthday of Jesus Christ. Let us meditate on that which is most worthy of admiration and imitation in these Saints.

I. ST. STEPHEN, PROTOMARTYR.

St. Stephen commands our admiration and imitation

1. On account of his zeal in fulfilling the duties of his calling. He took good care of the widows and orphans, and of all the people, so that whilst he administered the temporal affairs of the Church, no complaints were heard.—Besides, he endeavored to gain immortal souls for Christ and heaven. He is specially praised as a man "full of grace and fortitude," as "a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost."—With great courage he upbraided the chief priests with their hard-hearted resistance to the Holy Ghost, and with the murder of the "Just One."

The fiercest persecutions by the Jews were unable to deter him from performing his Apostolic work.—Would that you,

Christian parents, might be moved by a similar zeal for the salvation of souls to guard the innocence of your own children! This is your stern duty; for "you watch as being to render an account of their souls." Heb. xiii, 17. Heli died a sudden death because of his overindulgence of his sons. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

2. No less worthy of our admiration is his love of his enemies. In imitation of the example of his Divine Master St. Stephen, whilst being stoned, "kneeling down, cried out with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Act. vii, 59. Thus he complied with the command of the Lord: "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." Mt. v, 44.

May we never forget our dignity as Christians on whom the stern duty is imposed to forgive those who have offended us. Let us remember the promise of our Saviour: "If you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins." Mt. vi, 14.

II. ST. JOHN, APOSTLE.

After the Ascension, St. John lived first at Jerusalem, and then at Ephesus. He was thrown by Domitian into a caldron of boiling oil, and is thus reckoned a martyr, although he was miraculously preserved from harm. Afterwards, he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he received the heavenly visions described in the Apocalypse. He died at a great age in peace, at Ephesus, in the year 100. His tomb, on a mountain near the city, was glorified by many miracles.

St. John is to us a model of all virtues, especially of chastity and charity.

1. On account of his chastity, John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Our Lord loved above all things virginal purity, and it was this grace which endeared St. John to the

Sacred Heart. Virginal souls sing, as it were, a new canticle before the throne, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Apoc. xiv, 3, 4.—Never contaminate this great treasure in thought, word, or deed. Pray incessantly to your Jesus to preserve a pure heart in you.

2. As St. John loved tenderly and sincerely his fellowmen, so he endeavored to enkindle this heavenly flame in the hearts of his disciples. When, on account of his old age, he could no longer address the faithful, he would repeat again and again: "Little children, have love one for another." When questioned why he ever repeated the same exhortation, he replied: "Because it is the command of the Lord; and he who keeps it does enough." For no one can love his neighbor, *as he ought to*, unless he loves God above all things; and whoever loves God, will keep his commandments.—Charity is the distinguishing mark by which Jesus will recognize his disciples. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." John xiii, 35. Let us therefore endeavor to show sincere charity towards every one.

III. THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

1. The children of Bethlehem were baptized in their own blood, because they were slain for the name of Jesus. Jesus elevated them to the dignity of Saints, and the Holy Church venerates them on her altars. Their persecutor Herod died a dreadful death, and was buried in hell. Incomprehensible are the judgments of God.

2. Sadness was turned into joy. The day of death was to those children the beginning of life everlasting. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to bring with it joy, but sorrow: but afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice." Heb. xii, 11.

Peroration: The Church reminds us in the above festival days of the truth that there is no other way of salvation than in the Son of God made man. He is "the author of life"; "nor is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Act.

iii, 15; iv, 12. We cannot be saved, however, in this glorious name, unless we are willing, if necessary, to shed our blood for our holy faith; and to give testimony to our faith by a holy life.

J. E. Zollner.

New Year's Day.

VII.

HOMILY.

In the Gospel of this day it is recorded, that Jesus was circumcised, and that his name was called Jesus.

I.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

It is self-evident that the command: "On the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised" (Levit. xii, 3) did not apply to Jesus, who was neither contaminated with sin, nor in need of the blessing of Abraham. What were then the reasons inducing him to bear this sign of sin in his tender body, and to be reputed with sinners?

1. The Holy Fathers assign the following *general* reasons:

a. Jesus was to teach us reverential obedience to the commandments of God.

b. He would give the Jews no occasion to reject Him and His doctrine; for they would not have recognized him as belonging to their nation if he had neglected this fundamental observance of the ceremonial law.

c. He would preclude every doubt as to the truth of his human nature.

d. He was to sanctify the circumcision of the fathers, which received, by anticipation, their sacramental value from the circumcision of the Lord; as the sacrifices of the Old Covenant received their expiating power from the future bloody sacrifice on Golgotha.

c. He was to abrogate the Mosaic ceremonial law, according to the Apostle, who says: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that he might redeem those who were under the law." Gal. iv, 4.

2. In *particular*, the circumcision has a direct bearing on the work of redemption.

a. By bearing in his body the sign of sin, Jesus represented himself as a sinner. Thus the word was fulfilled: "Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in him." II Cor. v, 21. "By subjecting himself to the law of circumcision, Jesus appears as a sinner, because it was instituted for sinners only." St. Bernard.

b. The circumcision is the beginning of the redeeming sacrifice, it is the morning sacrifice, to be succeeded by the evening sacrifice on Golgotha. "Almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. ix, 22. The precious blood of Jesus Christ is ever mentioned in Holy Scripture as the price of our redemption. Vide Col. i, 14; I Pet. i, 18.

c. By his circumcision Jesus obliged himself to suffer and die for us. Whoever is circumcised, "is a debtor to do the whole law." Gal. v, 3. But Jesus could of course not observe the law in any other manner, than by fulfilling the figures which foreshadowed him.

3. The circumcision of the Lord reminds us also of the circumcision of the heart, the remembrance of which duty we should revive especially on New Year's Day. It is this circumcision "that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter" (Rom. ii, 28), and consists in self-mortification and self-denial. It is a strict duty imposed on us by Jesus Christ, who says: "If any man come after me, let him deny himself." Mt. xvi, 24. "Every one shall be salted with fire; and every victim shall be salted with salt." Mk. ix, 48. The life of the Saints was an uninterrupted succession of mortifications and hardships. We admire the austerity of St. Antony, the father of monks, and of his disciples; of St. Aloysius,

of St. Peter of Alcantara, and of St. Paul, who, although an Apostle, deemed it necessary to chastise his own body. "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate." I Cor. ix, 27. With a firm resolution to subdue our passions, let us enter upon the New Year in the name of Jesus.

II.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

As in the New Covenant, at the sacrament of baptism, so in the Old Covenant a name was given at the ceremony of circumcision. Although the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were informed by what name they should call the Saviour of the world, it was given him solemnly at the circumcision.

1. The name which God has given Him, "is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell."

a. To the inhabitants of celestial Jerusalem this sacred name is the cherished object of their adoration, and a source of ineffable delight. "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; and in thy name they shall rejoice all the day." Ps. lxxxviii, 17.

b. To the pilgrim on earth this name is "as oil poured out." (Cant. i, 2.) "Oil gives the fire subsistence, nourishes the flesh, and relieves pain; it is light, food, and medicine. Behold, all this applies to the name of the Bridegroom. The name of Jesus gives light wherever it is pronounced; it nourishes the heart that remembers it; it anoints and relieves wherever it is invoked; and heals every one who needs healing and longs for it." St. Bernard.

c. The name of Jesus is an object of horror to the reprobate spirits.

They are confounded with shame whenever it is pronounced. For it is the name of Him who conquered them, and destroyed their kingdom. It is like a fiery sword causing them the same torments as were once caused by the presence of the Lord. Mt.

viii, 28, 29. In this name the devils were expelled by the Apostles and even by Jews. Mk. ix, 37. Tertullian wrote to the Pagans, if they could find a Christian who were not able in the name of Jesus to expel the devil out of those possessed by him, they might forthwith take his life.

What can you fear when this glorious name is inscribed in your hearts? There it is engraven by faith, hope, and charity; or, in other words, by being inhabited by the Holy Ghost. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." I Cor. xii, 3.

2. We must also glorify the name of Jesus

a. By a sincere devotion, ever remembering it with reverence, charity and gratitude; and choosing it as the centre of our devotion. "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Col. iii, 17.

b. By external reverence, not taking this august name in vain, but using it only in grave matters, inclining our head and bending our knee.

c. By invoking this holy name with confidence in time of tribulation. (Lk. viii, 24.)

d. By a holy life. Christian virtues are the most beautiful wreath for the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus will be to us a *sweet name.*

On entering upon the New Year, let us resolve to do honor to the name that was given us when being christened. Let us also endeavor to fulfill the duties connected with the name of Christian. Then the New Year will be a happy year to us, and the time of sowing for eternity. Although your name should remain unknown among men on earth, it is written in the *Book of Life.*

VIII.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ITS THREEFOLD SIGNIFICANCE.

The words of Holy Scripture, that our Saviour "gave him-

self for us, that he might redeem us from iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works," are well applied to the mystery of circumcision. In this mystery we behold (*a*) his obedience, since he subjected himself to the law of circumcision; (*b*) his humility, since he shed his precious blood the first time; (*c*) his resolve to save our souls, since he took the name of Jesus. We should, therefore, consider a threefold significance of this festivity.

I.

CHRIST IS CIRCUMCISED.

He subjected himself to the law of circumcision for the following reasons:

1. He was to deliver us from the circumcision of the body. Let us consider this law

a. In its *severity.* It was enjoined on the offspring of Abraham so strenuously, that the male in whom it was not observed was destroyed out of God's people. Gen. xvii, 14. And the circumcision was so painful, that sometimes a child died from its consequences.

b. In its *significance.* The circumcision was, in the *first place*, the sign of the Old Covenant. According to God's own declaration it was to be a sign "for the covenant between me and you." Gen. xvii, 11. As slaves bear the mark of their masters, so the servant of God in the Old Covenant bore the mark of servitude.—It was, in the *second place*, a figure of the covenant in the New Testament. It was the baptism of blood in the Old Testament, by virtue of which the original guilt, connected with the propagation of the race, was expiated in a bloody manner. This bloody atonement gained its efficacy from the future merits of Jesus Christ.

c. In its *fulfillment.* Jesus fulfilled the figure of circumcision. By being circumcised he subjected himself to the servitude of the whole law. "I testify again to every man that circumciseth himself, that he is a debtor to the whole law." Gal. v, 3. Thus he took verily the form of a servant. But his servitude

was the cause of our adoption of sons, and by the circumcision of Jesus we are exempt from this law. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons," etc. Gal. iv, 4-7.

2. He was to teach us spiritual circumcision.

a. Spiritual circumcision is demanded again and again by Holy Scripture. Deut. x, 16. Rom. ii, 28. Jerem. ix, 26. Act. vii, 51.

b. It consists in the observance of the commandments, and in the removal of all that displeases God, and is an obstacle to our salvation; such as pride, vanity, earthly attachments, etc.

II.

CHRIST SHEDS HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD THE FIRST TIME.

1. We behold the first pledge of our redemption.

When Moses had neglected to circumcise his little son, the Lord would have slain him, unless Sephora, his wife, had circumcised him immediately, saying: "A bloody spouse art thou to me." (Exodus iv, 24.) In a similar way, Jesus becomes to-day the bloody spouse of our soul, which God spares for the sake of this precious blood.

2. His participation of this rite is a proof of his true human nature.

There have been heretics who have asserted that Christ did not truly suffer, that his body was only a phantom. This heresy is refuted by the blood and tears of the Child.

3. Circumcision is a figure of the entire Sacred Passion.

a. Joseph announces to Mary that to-day is the day when the Child should be circumcised. Mary, although full of sorrow, says: "God's will be done."—In a similar manner Jesus acted in the garden of Olivet.

b. Mary delivers the Child to the priests.—In later years Jesus was delivered to Annas and Caiphas, to Pilate and Herod.

c. His name was called Jesus. In this name his entire Sacred Passion is prefigured.

d. The denudation of the Child prefigures the ignominious denudation of Jesus during his crucifixion.

e. The weeping of the Child, when he was circumcised, prefigures Christ's anguish of death.

f. Mary catches up the first blood which Jesus shed, offering it up to the Heavenly Father. At the foot of the Cross she saw all his sacred blood flowing forth for the salvation of mankind, and offered it up to the Heavenly Father for them.

g. Mary shed tears during the whole ceremony, which foreshadowed her ineffable grief at the foot of the Cross.

4. We are reminded of the value of our soul.

Only a God-man was able to redeem us; and our souls were of such value in His estimation that he gave all for them, even his precious blood.—How is it then, that you slight the value of your soul, "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver * * * but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled?" I Pet. i, 18.

III.

HIS NAME WAS CALLED JESUS.

1. Every name has its significance.

a Whenever God imposes a name, special mysteries, promises, and dignities are connected with it; as was the case with Adam, Abraham, Peter.

b. When men give names, they generally call on Saints in heaven to take the child under their special protection.

2. The name of Jesus surpasses all other names in significance. "God hath given him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow," etc. Philip. ii, 9.

a. This name was assigned by God himself, announced by the Angel, and borne by God the Son of himself.

b. To us it is a name full of sweetness and consolation, of devotion, confidence and strength, in a word, the source of our

salvation, and the terror of our enemies. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Act. iv, 12.

Let us then begin the New Year in the name of Jesus. May Jesus be with us, and we with Him!

St. Vincent Ferrer.

Sunday After New Year.

HOMILY.

The Gospel of this day represents to us the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in three different situations: when they left Egpyt, when they arrived in the land of Israel, and in their sojourn at Nazareth.

I.

THE DEPARTURE OUT OF EGYPT.

The Gospel informs us *when* and *why* the Holy Family went out of Egypt.

1. As to the time, the Heavenly Father called his Son out of Egypt, when Herod was dead. The Evangelist records in plain words, without any comment, the death of this tyrant, leaving his judgment to Him who said: "Revenge is mine, I shall repay." Rom. xii, 19. Herod's end was most frightful, a just punishment for his crimes. He died the death of an impenitent sinner. He gave instructions to his sister, Salome, and to her husband, Alexas, to have the chief men among the Jews, whom he had imprisoned in the Hippodrome near Jericho, slaughtered immediately after his death, that the day of his death might not be a day of joy, but of universal mourning. But this command was not obeyed.

The sojourn of Jesus in Egypt was the cause of great blessings upon that pagan land. According to an old tradition, the Holy Family dwelt in Matarea, near Heliopolis, in the vicinity of the Jewish temple, built by the exiled high-priest Onias in 150 before Christ, and by their bright virtues propagated the

knowledge of the true God. In the same region thousands of monks lived in later years in holy solitude, incessantly praising God by prayer and fasting.

2. When Herod was dead, Joseph was told by the Angel of the Lord to go into the land of Israel. Why is it that God manifested his will to Joseph? Because Joseph was the head of the family; and as the Child was to be subject to Joseph and Mary, so Mary was to be subject to Joseph: such is the order established by God for families.—God speaks to us also by our conscience, by the priests, by extraordinary events in our life, etc. In whatever manner he speaks to us, let us say with Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and with David: "O my God, be thou not silent to me; lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Ps. xxvii, 1.

The Angel said: "Rise, and take the Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead who sought the life of the Child." Herod and three of his most cruel sons were dead; but the Child was in safety. Thus God himself takes revenge. All the enemies of God, the Neros of olden and modern times, have perished miserably, whilst the Lord and his Anointed have triumphed. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against his Christ. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them; and the Lord shall deride them." Ps. ii, 2, 4.

Herod, with all his power and splendor, is dead. And you are perhaps proud on account of your riches and honors. Beware that the words of David may never apply to you: "I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and lo, he was not; and I sought him, and his place was not found." Ps. xxxvi, 35. The day is not far off when they will say of you also: "He is dead." Would that your memory might be in benediction!

II.

THE ARRIVAL IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

"Who, rising up, took the Child, and his mother, and came

into the land of Israel," etc. Let us admire in Joseph his punctual obedience, and his anxious solicitude for the Child.

1. Joseph obeys the Angel without delay. Neither the darkness of the night, nor the great distance, nor the hardships of the journey, nor the dangers awaiting him in the land of Israel, prevent him from going. But in order to recommend the obedience of Joseph, Holy Scripture expressly says, that he did whatsoever he was commanded to do. The Angel had said: "Rise, and take the Child, and his mother, and go into the land of Israel." And of Joseph it is said: "Who, rising up, took the Child, and his mother, and came into the land of Israel."—We have also a holy Angel on our side, our Guardian Angel, sent by God to teach and exhort us. Do we also follow the exhortations of our Angel as willingly as did St. Joseph? God demands of us to follow the inspirations of our holy Angel, repeating to every one of us the words once addressed to his people Israel: "Behold, I will send my Angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned." Exodus. xxiii, 20.

2. "But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep, he retired into the parts of Galilee."

It may be that Joseph intended to reside in Bethlehem, "his city," or at least to return God thanks in the temple of Jerusalem. But when he heard, that Archelaus, who had slaughtered three thousand Jews at the beginning of his reign, in order to spread terror everywhere, reigned over a part of the dominion of Herod, he would at least use all human precautions, in order to save the life of the Child. After having done his part, he was warned by God to retire into Galilee.—What shall I say of those parents, who deliver their own children into the hands of every Herod, of every Archelaus? Verily, on the day of judgment it will be better with those parents who, blinded as they were by the devil, placed their children into the fiery arms of Moloch.

III.

THE SOJOURN OF THE HOLY FAMILY AT NAZARETH.

1. "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth." This

obscure place, never before mentioned in Holy Scripture, attains, through Jesus, the highest rank of all cities, "for the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might destroy things that are." I Cor. i, 28. This little town was so much contemned, that Nathanael said: "Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" Many virtuous Christians lead an obscure life, but they are approved by God, and one day will be with the once poor Lazarus, whilst their oppressors will be buried in hell.

2. "That it might be fulfilled, what was said by the prophets: that he shall be called a Nazarene." This prophecy is not found in Holy Scripture, wherefore it seems to have been a prophecy of oral tradition. Jude mentions (Verse 14 and 15) a prophecy of Henoch, which is not found in Holy Scripture either.

This name *Nazarene*, an ignominy before the world, has become an object of glory in the kingdom of grace. Whilst the enemies of Jesus, and even the devils, called him by that name, it has become the glorious inscription of the Cross, the language of the Angels in the Sepulchre, and the powerful name in which the Apostles wrought miracles. (Act. iii, 6.) Thus we are reminded by this very name, that humility is the way leading to eternal glory.

VIII.

PANEGYRIC IN HONOR OF ST. JOHN, APOSTLE.

St. John teaches us through his example the means by which we may gain the special love of Jesus Christ.

I.

BY PURITY OF HEART.

1. The virtue of purity is exceedingly acceptable to Jesus Christ. He is the divine spouse "who feedeth among lilies" (Cant. ii, 16); the prince of the kingdom into which shall not enter any thing defiled (Apoc. xxi, 27); the God-man, who chose a Virgin for his mother, the Virgin, whose purity is even admired by the Angels.

2. By this virtue St. John rendered himself worthy of the predilection of Jesus.

a. He preserved virginal innocence during his entire life, at a time when its value was recognized by very few.

b. On account of his virginity Jesus recommended his Mother to his protection on earth; the Virgin to the virgin.

c. The Church herself ascribes the distinction of this disciple to his immaculate life. Lect. ii. Noct.

3. By chastity, such as is demanded by our state of life, we must also strive to obtain the complacency of our Lord. True, this virtue demands continual care and watchfulness. It is like to the finest crystal that is contaminated by every breath, to the snow-white lily that suffers from the slightest touch. But this is the very reason why Jesus loves this virtue so much, if we preserve it in its beauty under the greatest pains and dangers. "He that loveth cleanness of heart, for the grace of his lips shall have the King for his friend." Prov. xxii, 11.

a. Yet there are many who are entirely destitute of this virtue. Some, being unaware of its value, expose it to every danger; others deem it impossible to live chastely; nor do they employ the means to subdue the flesh.

b. These fleshly men have no part either in the heart, or in the kingdom of Jesus their Saviour. Gen. vi, 3. Apoc. xxii, 15: "Without are dogs and the unchaste."

Therefore let us examine our conscience with regard to our thoughts and desires, words, conversation and actions. Job xxxi, 1, 2.

Let us be sincere and ardent friends of this virtue which Jesus Christ values so highly, and rewards so liberally. Let us strive for cleanness of soul and body, that in life and death we may be of the number of his favored friends.

II.

BY CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR.

1. Charity was the characteristic virtue of St. John, as is manifest,

a. From his Gospel, wherein the doctrine of Jesus Christ on charity is more amply expounded than in the records of his other Evangelists.

b. From his Epistles, which are so many sparkling flames of charity.

c. From his actions during his entire life, and from the favored subject of his exhortations in his old age.

Such a heart, overflowing with charity, was tenderly loved by Him who is charity itself, and who regards this virtue as the distinguishing mark of his disciples.

2. Charity ought to be our principal virtue also.

a. The law of charity is engraven in our hearts, as well as in the heart of St. John, and its exercise is not beyond our power. What is easier, sweeter, and more in conformity with human nature, "than to have love one for another?"

b. Are we not all children of our Heavenly Father, members of one and the same spiritual body, redeemed by the same divine Blood?

c. Do we not partake of the same table; are we not instructed in the same school for the purpose of obtaining the same everlasting happiness? Verily, we have every reason to be of one mind and one heart.

3. But does charity, the queen of all virtues, reign in our souls indeed? Does it reign in our families, in this congregation? Does it reign in human society in general? Do we see those marks of true charity which St. Paul describes, or those which the disciple whom Jesus loved demands? I Cor. xiii, 4, etc.; I John iii, 16. Alas! how very different is the sight that greets us!

a. Yet without this virtue we are no disciples of the Lord, much less his favored disciples. The Lord will not know his own from working miracles, or from prophesying, or from their gift of tongues, or from their power over the evil spirits, but from the works of charity. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." John xiii, 35.

b. The want of it cannot be compensated for in any way, either by devotional practices and spiritual exercises, or by confraternities and pilgrimages, or by works of mortification and penance. I John iii, 19. Voluntary mortification is laudable, frequent Communion is very salutary, devotional practices are very useful; but "above all these things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection." Col. iii, 14.

III.

BY FAITHFULNESS TOWARD OUR SAVIOUR.

St. John did not leave his divine Master, when He was calumniated, persecuted, and put to death. When one of the Apostles betrayed his Master, another denied him, and all left him, St. John accompanied him to all the places of his sufferings; and even to Golgotha. Although his heart was bleeding, he remained at the foot of the Cross, as a model of the faithfulness required by Jesus of his disciples, of the faithfulness that follows him even to death

1. In spite of all adversities.

a. Faithfulness in prosperity is suspicious, for instance when our soul receives sweet consolation, when our daily pursuits are blessed, etc. Let every one of you give to himself the answer to the question, whether he would be, like Job, equally faithful in his attachment to God in prosperous and in evil days, in sadness and in gladness.

b. It is quite certain, that faithfulness is put to the test by afflictions. He who is truly faithful will follow the footsteps of his Saviour in time of humiliation, as well as in time of exaltation.

2. Notwithstanding the bad example given by others.

The Christian should bear the same good will toward his Saviour, as Ethai bore toward his king. II Kings xv, 21.

a. The greater number of men follow the banner of the enemy, as it is displayed by the world, by concupiscence and by selfishness. The faithful servant follows his Saviour, whether others adhere to him or not.

b. False human respect ought to be overcome. The faithful servant of God who is not attached to the world, is the aim of reviling and of laughing to scorn. But perseverance amidst revilings is the best mark of faithfulness.

c. Faithfulness is rewarded by faithfulness. As the disciple whom Jesus loved found sweet consolation and exceedingly great reward on the bosom of his Master, so all the faithful servants of Jesus Christ draw from the fountain of His Sacred Heart the necessary light, consolation, and grace; and will not be forsaken by Jesus at that terrible hour when all will forsake them, but will find the surest refuge in the sacred wound of his Heart, and in the next world will find their Judge their best friend.

Would that the example and intercession of St. John might spur us to gain for the future the love of the Divine Heart, and in the next world the reward of his favored friends!

Bordoni.

The Epiphany.

VII.
HOMILY.

The day of Epiphany is the great festival of those whose ancestors were Gentiles, and to whom the Wise Men of the East, who were the first of the pagan world to pay homage to Jesus, are ancestors in the faith. They are also our models in adoring our Incarnate God. And under this view let us meditate on the Gospel for this festival day, considering the Wise Men *before, during, and after their adoration.*

I. THE WISE MEN BEFORE THEIR ADORATION.

At the beginning of the Gospel several questions demand an answer.

1. As to the questions, who were these Wise Men, how many they were, and whence they came, we answer:

a. They were *Magi*, as the original text calls them; that is to say, men of learning, whose profession was the study of astrology. This class of men were held in great consideration by their countrymen; so much so that from among them their kings were exclusively chosen.

b. That they were themselves kings is an old tradition, held by many of the Fathers, who saw in the event commemorated on this festival day the prophecy of the Psalmist fulfilled: "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents; the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts" (Ps. lxxi, 10), not as though the Wise Men actually came from Tharsis, but because in Holy Scripture the epithet, the *kings of Tharsis*, is often employed to signify the kings generally of the pagan world. They were not, however, mighty potentates, but petty princes, such as the four *kings* vanquished by Abraham (Gen. xiv), and the friends of Job, also called kings. (Tobias ii, 15.)

c. As regards their *number*, it is the common opinion, maintained, amongst others, by St. Leo, St. Maximus of Turin,

Origen, etc., that they were three in number, as would indeed seem to be intimated by the number of their gifts, for it is certainly more consistent with the august nature of the occasion, and the dignity of the personages concerned that every one should have his particular present. Ven. Bede is the first who ever mentioned their names: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar.

d. As regards the *country* whence they came, we know only that they came from some country "east" of Jerusalem, where the true God was not known, so that they were the first fruits of the Gentiles presented to our Lord.

e. As regards the *time* of their visit, the commonly received opinion in the Church, that they presented themselves before the holy cradle shortly (on the thirteenth day, it is supposed,) after our Lord's birth, receives a solid support from the words of the Gospel: "When Jesus was born, behold," etc., which clearly imply the lapse of a short interval between the two events. They came also *before* the Purification and Presentation in the temple, consequently before the fortieth day after the birth of the Lord, since St. Luke (ii, 39) says that Mary and Joseph, after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth. Whence they fled into Egypt, having been divinely admonished in sleep to that effect, in order that they might take the Divine Child out of the reach of the murderous designs of Herod. The circumstance that Herod extended the age of his intended victims to the period of two years, is by no means fatal to the commonly received opinion, because the tyrant may have been influenced by the supposition that the infant of whom so much was said, had attained a size not attained ordinarily by children of His age.

2. As regards the star leading the Wise Men, we may put the following questions:

a. What kind of star was this? Most likely, it was no star belonging to our system, but a luminous body created, as St. Leo says, for this single purpose, of special brilliancy, attracting the eyes and hearts of men more than other stars. That it

was no star in reality may be conjectured from its indicating localities; from its appearance by day and by night; from its moving at one time, and continuing stationary at another, and from its standing over the house where the Divine Infant was. It may be compared to the pillar of fire, by which the children of Israel were led out of Egypt into the Promised Land. This star appeared to the Wise Men, according to St. Augustine, on the day of the birth of our Lord.

b. And how did the Wise men know that this star was indicating the birth of the Expected of nations? God enlightened them either through an Angel, or interiorily only, by his illuminating grace. Besides, according to many Holy Fathers, their attention was drawn to it on account of the prophecy of Balaam regarding the star that "would rise out of Jacob," (Num. xxiv, 17,) an acquaintance with which prophecy was extensively spread among the nations of the East. That this star was long before expected is intimated by the words: "We have seen his star in the East," as though every one were aware that such a star was to make its appearance; as also by the terror that overtook Herod, and all Jerusalem with him.

c. Near Jerusalem the star disappeared, so that they had to inquire:—"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" God thus ordained, in order that in addition to the testimony of the star they might also receive the testimony of Holy Scripture, and of the Jews, and that the attention of the latter might be called to the birth of their Saviour.—"And are come to adore him." They were not come to adore a merely human king of the Jews (for what could have induced them to make a long journey in order to adore such a one?) but they are come to adore a king, in adoring whom, as St. Augustine remarks, they could hope to attain their own salvation in God.

Application. The star of the Messias is shining for us also. It is (1) the word of God, Holy Scripture interpreted by the Church. (2) The Catholic Church, established by Jesus Christ; the city on the mountain visible to all nations. She leads all those who trust themselves to her guidance, to Jesus Christ by

her doctrine, her sacraments, and the example of the Saints. (3) The grace of God enlightening those "that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to direct their feet into the way of peace." Lk. i, 79.

3. "And king Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Herod was troubled through the fear of losing his throne for himself and for his family. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, addicted to earthly pleasures, and sunk in the sleep of sin, were afraid of the coming of the Messias, because they were not willing to change their sinful lives.

Herod assembling together all the chief priests (the heads of the twenty-four priestly families) and Scribes of the people (the official interpreters of the law and the prophets), he inquired of them where Christ should be born.

Thus he was, in the hands of God, the instrument of obtaining an official testimony of Christ. The chief priests and Scribes point out Bethlehem as the birth-place of Christ, according to the prophet Micheas v, 2, quoting, not the precise words, but their meaning.

These priests and Scribes, by giving testimony to Christ, seal their own judgment; they are, as St. Augustine remarks, like to those carpenters who built Noe's ark, the vessel of salvation to others, whilst they themselves perished in the waters of the deluge. They were as churchbells that call others to adore the Divine Infant in our Bethlehem, but they themselves never enter the church.

Let us, following the good example of the Wise Men and detesting the bad example of the priests and Scribes, take a delight in visiting our beloved Jesus in our churches. We know more about Christ than they did, we have heard more of his miracles, we have the testimony of eighteen hundred years to his truth. Our Bethlehem is not at a remote distance. Let us frequently gather there, in order to adore Jesus, as did the Wise Men prostrate before His cradle.

II. THE WISE MEN DURING THEIR ADORATION.

1. *Their example.*

The Wise Men had no sooner left Herod than "the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was."—"And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

a. The star appeared in its original brilliancy and went before them, until it moved no longer. And, seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. They enjoy the well-earned reward of their troublesome journey. "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded."

b. They entered into the house, that is, according to the holy Fathers, into the stable where our Lord was born, Jewish usage giving the name of *house* to every dwelling place. (Cf. Ps. ciii, 17.)

c. "And falling down they adored him." Men fall down before a child; kings before the son of a poor mother; those who had left palaces lie prostrate on the ground in a stable, adoring a child for whom there had been no room in Bethlehem.—They adored him. The brilliancy of the star and the prophecies of Balaam and of Micheas had acquainted them with the greatness of the child. They adored him as the infinite good, the Lord of heaven and earth. It is the opinion of the Holy Fathers generally, that they paid him divine honor, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit with the knowledge that he was the Man-God, the repairer of the human race. What less could have induced them to come so great distance to pay homage to a child?

d. They offered him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh. These gifts had, according to the Holy Fathers, a very marked and significant adaptation for expressing their belief, gold being presented to a king, frankincense, which was used in sacrificing, being offered to God; and myrrh, which was used for preserving and embalming dead bodies, being offered to Him as a mortal man. Thus the Wise Men confess Jesus as king, as God and as mortal man.

2. *How we should follow their example.*

Whenever we visit Jesus in church, we should fall down before him, adore him, and offer him gold, frankincense and myrrh.

a. We should fall down, so as to confess, that Jesus is the sovereign Lord and King of all creatures. It should never be hard to us to bend our knee, and say our prayers in a kneeling attitude; for he it is in whose name every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell. Philp. ii, 10. And whilst our body is humbled, we should be deeply convinced of our unworthiness to appear in his presence.

b. We should adore the Divine Child. The adoration of Jesus is the principal motive of our going to church. There especially the word ought to be verified: "The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and him only shalt thou serve." Mt. iv. 10. Or where are we to adore God, if we are not willing to do so in church?

c. We should offer to him gold, frankincense, and myrrh; the gold of divine love and of charity, the frankincense of our prayer, and the myrrh of mortification, by subduing our passions, and guarding our senses.

III. THE WISE MEN AFTER THEIR ADORATION.

"And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country."

1. In the first place, remember of what avail it is to visit and adore Jesus. In their own country the Wise Men were instructed by a brilliant star; in Jerusalem by the words of Holy Scripture; but in Bethlehem where they had adored Jesus, God himself directly or at least through his holy Angel speaks to them, warning them not to believe the words of cruel Herod: "When you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him." Believe me, the more familiar our conversation is with Jesus in church, the more abundantly he will impart to us his grace. I cannot but with emotion remem-

ber the words of our Saviour: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Mt. xi, 28. He invites us all to come to him, and to receive his sweet consolation.

2. In the second place, let us call to mind, that they went back another way into their own country. This should be also with us the effect of divine worship at which we assist. Whether we pray, or hear the word of God, it should ever be our firm resolution not to return to Herod, that is, to the devil and the alluring world, to the sin of the Old Adam, but to go another way into our own country. The country destined for us by God is not this earth; for here we have no permanent city. Our country, our home, is heaven. If we have lost heaven by sin, we must recover it by penance. We must leave the path of sin, and walk the way of the divine commandments. Whenever you take leave of Jesus in church, he repeats to you the words once addressed to the young man: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Mt. xix, 17.

VIII.

THE EPIPHANY AS REPRESENTED BY SACRED ART.

You have seen no doubt the Epiphany represented by sacred art. In the stable near Bethlehem we behold Mary, holding in her arms the Divine Infant. Three men clad in costly apparel, kneel at the feet of the Child, doing homage to Him. On the floor are seen three crowns, and caskets with precious gifts. Above the stable shines a brilliant star shedding light around the adorable head of the Child. Let this edifying and instructive picture be the subject of our festival sermon. We consider (1) the Infant in the arms of Mary; (2) the Wise Men prostrate at his feet; (3) the star of unusual brilliancy.

I. THE INFANT IN THE ARMS OF MARY.

I. *The Infant.*

Behold

1. The Son of God in his human nature.

a. The Prophet says: "A child is born to us; and a son is given to us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." Isai. ix, 6.

b. The Angel says: "This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger." Lk. ii, 11.

c. The Heavenly Father says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mt. iii, 17.

d. The Apostle says: "He debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape formed as a man." Philip. ii, 7.

Behold

2. The salvation of the world.

Jesus Christ is

a. The light of the world. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii, 12.

b. The peace of the world. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you." John xiv, 27.

c. The reconciliation of the world. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Lk. xix, 10.

d. The life of the world. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." John x, 10.

Let us then admire the infinite charity of the Divine Child, and return it by ardent love. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha." I Cor. xvi, 22.

II. THE INFANT IN THE ARMS OF MARY.

Behold

1. The Mother of God.

"Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Lk. i, 31. An infinite dignity! Mary says to her God, "My Son," to her Creator, "My Child."

2. The mediatrix of grace.

The Infant is reposing in the arms of Mary, who in the joy of her heart presents Him to the embrace of the Holy Kings, thus mediating their salvation. "He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." Prov. viii, 35. Raise up your eyes to Mary, who is admired for her mercy no less than for her dignity. She has a claim to your reverence and confidence. "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Lk. i, 48.

III. THE WISE MEN PROSTRATE BEFORE THE INFANT.

Behold three kings

I. *Full of faith.*

1. Whom did they seek?

Him, that is born King of the Jews. Mt. ii, 1. They represented to their own minds the Messias as a mighty king. Therefore they expected to find Him in splendor and glory, in a magnificent palace, waited upon by a numerous host of servants.

2. Whom did they find?

A weeping infant in the darkness of a stable; poverty on all sides. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Mt. viii, 20. Nevertheless "falling down they adored him." Mt. ii, 11. How firm a faith! We have far more numerous and convincing proofs of the truth of revelation, and yet how feeble is our faith!

Behold three kings

II. *Full of devotion.*

"They adored him"

1. With great reverence. Recognizing in the poor Infant their true God, they laid down their crowns and prostrated themselves on the ground.

2. With great fervor. Who can describe the sentiments of love, gratitude, and joy, that filled their hearts?

We are also frequently near our Lord. In our churches he dwells day and night under the sacramental species in the midst of his children. And our devotion? The holy angels who surround our altar, bewail our lukewarmness and distraction of mind.

Behold three kings

III. *As models of the sacrificing spirit.*

1. They made a long and toilsome journey before they reached the place where the Child was.

2. They offered him costly gifts. "Opening their treasures, they offered to him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

God demands sacrifices. The life of the Christian ought to be a continual self-sacrifice. But do you possess this self-sacrificing spirit? Are you not negligent in frequenting the church? Have you not many excuses when your aid is asked for in building or adorning a house of God?

IV. THE STAR OF UNUSUAL BRILLIANCY.

Behold

I. *The messenger of grace.*

"We have seen his star." Mt. ii, 2. To the shepherds an Angel was the messenger of grace, to the Wise Men a star. "The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." Isai. ix, 2.

II. *The guide to salvation.*

The star led the Wise Men

1. Out of a pagan land.

Whatever may have been the country whence they came, is was do doubt a land where paganism with all its abominations prevailed. The star led them out of this country where "they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things" (Rom. i, 23); out of a land of darkness and vice.

2. To the Manger of the Saviour.

"The star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was." Mt. ii, 9. The star led them to Him who had been promised to the fallen race in Paradise, to the Lamb "who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i, 29); to the High-Priest, "who gave himself a redemption for all." I Tim. ii, 6.

God, in his infinite bounty, still makes his stars to rise as messengers of grace, and guides to salvation; stars announcing: "The night is passed, and the day is at hand" (Rom. xiii, 12); stars which when followed lead us out of the land of heathens, i. e., out of infidelity and wickedness, to the Manger of the Saviour, that is, to the knowledge and love of God. A star of this kind is sometimes a sermon, sometimes an earnest warning in the confessional, sometimes a misfortune. Oh! that we would follow the light of these stars! "Neglect not the grace which is in thee" (I Tim. iv, 14). The grace of God is not efficacious, unless we co-operate with it.

J. Schuen.

First Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel of this day represents to us Mary and Joseph as models of parents, and Jesus as the most perfect model for children.

I.

MARY AND JOSEPH AS MODELS FOR PARENTS.

1. "When Jesus was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to the feast," etc. Mary and Joseph were wont to go every year up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch. And Jesus went with them. The Gospel does not say, that Jesus went the first time to be present at the celebration of the Pasch, but it mentions only that Jesus being now twelve years old, would also fulfill the law prescribing that every young Israelite, after having completed his twelfth year, should go to Jerusalem at the Paschal solemnity. It may be that he accompanied his parents the other years too, as Ven. Bede supposes, and as the tender love of his parents which hardly admitted of a separation renders quite probable.

Mary and Joseph observed the custom of going every year to the temple at Jerusalem, to worship God, and to edify others, and to be edified.—It is a sight delightful even for holy Angels to see father and mother go to church together with their children, who thus receive the most efficacious lesson. *Exempla trahunt.*

2. "And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintances," etc.

Exceedingly great was their grief and solicitude when they could nowhere find their Divine Child, although they knew that

no harm could happen to Him who is the Lord of animate as well as of inanimate nature. Nor had they any reason to reproach themselves with negligence in regard to the Child. For whatever may be the explanation of the extraordinary occurrence, whether Jesus made himself invisible to his parents, as Origen says, or whether he was supposed to be with the other children who according to custom marched in procession, separated from the grown people, it was the adorable disposition of Divine Providence, that Jesus should remain in the temple without the knowledge of Mary and Joseph, in order to have an opportunity to give to children, and to all men, an important lesson. Nevertheless Mary and Joseph were seeking him three days and nights "sorrowing." This sorrow was so great that St. Alphonse of Liguori with other Saints considers the sorrow caused in the heart of Mary by the loss of her Child as greater than her grief at the foot of the Cross.

Learn ye, parents, from these holy parents to be watchful with regard to your dear children. Above all you must be of one mind and consent in training your children. Further, you must not allow your children to stay away from home frequently and without sufficient cause. Especially they ought to be under your own roof at night. The night is a dangerous time for men, particularly for youth. Owls, bats, and wild animals, love the darkness of the night.

3. "And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." They wondered at Jesus manifesting his divinity in his early age, when they had not expected this manifestation.

Far from reproaching her divine Son, Mary only intended to give expression to her exceedingly great sorrow. Her words indicate, at the same time, that the loss of Jesus had not occurred through fault of the holy parents: "Why hast thou done so to us?"

As model of a wife, she calls Joseph by the most honorable name *father*, and gives him the preference.

By these words we are also reminded of the fact, that Jesus called Joseph by the sweet name of *father*.

Would that husbands and wives might ever reverence each other as Joseph and Mary; and that every child might endeavor to imitate the divine Child in honoring his parents.

To lose Jesus by sin is the greatest loss you can ever sustain. Oh! that you would seek him sorrowing, like Mary and Joseph, and the spouse commemorated in the Canticles! (Cant. iii, 2; v, 8.)

II.

JESUS AS THE MODEL FOR CHILDREN.

To-day the Divine Child is represented to our children as the most perfect model for their conduct (1) toward God, (2) toward their parents, and (3) toward their own selves.

1. When Jesus was twelve years old, he went up to Jerusalem—a journey of several days—that he might be present at the Paschal solemnities in the temple at Jerusalem. He remained three days and nights in the temple, where his holy parents found him sitting in the midst of doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.

Here you have an answer to the question: "How ought a child conduct himself toward God?" He ought to be diligent in prayer, like Jesus; diligent in going to church, like Jesus; he ought to endeavor to become acquainted with the word of God. By the answer given to his parents, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" he clearly intimated, that in order to be children of God, it is necessary to consider as your chief business, praying, frequenting church, and hearing and learning the word of God.

2. Jesus said to his blessed Mother in an affectionate manner: "How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" How is it that you sought me whom you know to be the Son of the heavenly Father, in any other place than in my Father's house, the temple?—The first words recorded of Jesus are a filial conversation with his

parents about God his heavenly Father. Is it also your delight, O children, to converse with your parents on your heavenly Father, and on divine things?—The sorrow caused by Jesus originated in his loving God more than his parents. The sorrow caused by our children to their parents originates in their loving neither God nor their parents.

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." From the temple Jesus returned into the house of his parents, because children ought to love best to be in church, or at home with their parents. And as he served God in the temple, so he served his parents in their house. "He was subject to them." "Who was subject, and to whom? Blush, O proud dust. God humbles himself, and thou elevatest thyself." St. Bernard. How many virtues exercised by Jesus during thirty years of secluded life could have been mentioned by the Evangelist! But he contents himself with presenting for our meditation the Son of God in his humble obedience: for humility and obedience are the foundation of the edifice of virtue. Therefore the Apostle says, in accordance with this Gospel: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him." Philip. ii, 8. It is from the lack of humility and obedience that the moral order of things is disturbed. Hence the decay of families, and states, hence luxury and pauperism; a foolish desire for emancipation, hence heresy and infidelity.

God's wrath comes upon wayward children, frequently even in their earthly life. Cf. Deut. xxi, 20; xxvii, 16. Prov. xxx, 17. Jesus gave you an example by being subject to his parents. The all-wise God ever did what was the most perfect. And what was this? He assisted his father in his carpenter work, so that the Jews said: "Is not this the carpenter?" Mk. vi, 3. Humility, obedience, faithfulness in fulfilling the duties of your state of life, are for you also the way leading to heaven.

3. "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men." Jesus, who from the moment of his conception was full of grace and wisdom, could not really advance therein.

But with advancing age he displayed and manifested gradually his grace and wisdom so that it appeared as though he were really advancing in them. Jesus conducted himself, as if he were a child, like other children, that the children of men might learn to advance in grace and wisdom, as they advance in age. Let therefore not one day pass without performing good works and increasing in knowledge, especially of God. Like Mary, his Mother, let us keep "all these words," that is whatever we hear about Jesus and his holy life, in our hearts, imitating the grand pattern of our life.

VIII.

NECESSITY OF PENANCE.

(*St. Antony, Patriarch of Monks.*)

St. Antony, born in the year 251, in Upper Egypt, hearing at Mass the words, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor," gave away all his vast possessions. Although a mere youth, he entered the desert, where he lived to a very advanced age, incessantly performing works of penance. St. Athanasius, his biographer, says that the mere knowledge of how St. Antony lived is a good guide to virtue. His life was an uninterrupted succession of the severest works of penance, wherefore to do penance is to follow him as guide to heaven. Let me then address you on the necessity of penance.

I.

FAITH TEACHES THE NECESSITY OF PENANCE.

1. Christ, the founder of our faith, imposes upon us an obligation to do penance:

a. By his word. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mt. iv, 17. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 3.

b. By his example. The whole life of Jesus was a life of self-mortification, and of the most austere penance. He began

to do penance at his entrance into the world, and after continuing his severe penance during thirty-three years, finished it on the Cross. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Philip. ii, 8.

2. The Apostles, the heralds of faith, insist on the necessity of doing penance:

a. By preaching. They went before princes and nations, exhorting them to do penance. They seized every opportunity to exhort all to do penance. St. Peter said: "Do penance. Save yourselves from this perverse generation." Act ii, 38, 40. St. Paul: "God, indeed, having overlooked the times of this ignorance, now declareth to men, that all should everywhere do penance." Act xvii, 30. St. James: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow." iv, 9. St. John: "Love not the world, nor those things which are in the world." I John ii, 15.

b. By their own example. Every Apostle was a penitent by his *poverty.* "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff." Mt. x, 9. *By their laborious preaching.* "In labor and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness" they had to perform their sacred functions (II Cor. xi, 27). *By voluntary works of penance.* "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate." I Cor. ix, 27.

3. The Gospel, the code of faith,

a. Excludes impenitent sinners from heaven. There is not one Scriptural text found that would give hope to the impenitent sinner. On the contrary we read: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, etc., shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9. "According to thy hardness, and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God." Rom. ii, 5.

b. It knows of no salvation but by penance. The Gospel promises remission of sins only to the penitent sinner. The Prodigal Son, Mary Magdalene, Peter, the thief on the cross. "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Act. iii, 19.

4. *The Church teaches the necessity of penance.*

a. By her primitive penitential discipline. The holy Church, in the earliest ages, excluded from her communion notorious sinners, to whom she only granted reconciliaton after the performance of a public and severe penance. Even personages of princely rank had to subject themselves to these penitential regulations; as, for example, the emperor Theodosius. Auricular confession, and fasts, were practiced from the very beginning of the Church.

b. By her incessant exhortations, in every age, to do penance. Although she has lessened her original austerity, she nevertheless preaches at all times the necessity of mortification, and endeavors to quicken in her children the spirit of penance. Hence her fasting days, her missions, etc. No one receives forgiveness of sins, except he confesses them with a contrite heart, and is willing to repair any damage caused by them.

II.

FAITH FACILITATES THE PERFORMANCE OF PENANCE.

1. By the grace which is granted to faith.

Penance is very arduous, nay impossible, to the natural faculties of man. Faith furnishes us the necessary grace from heaven, by virtue of which we are enabled to perform the most arduous works. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13. How numerous are the saint penitents who with holy joy underwent the most austere mortifications!

2. By the example of numberless Saints.

Faith points out many Saints in all centuries who were heroes or heroines of penance, as St. Dominic, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of the Cross, St. Margaret of Cortona, St. Rosa of Lima. Above all, it is the example of Jesus Christ that encourages us to penance.

3. By the reward promised.

Faith promises to the impenitent sinner an infinite reward. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mt. v, 5. "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17.

Peroration: Let us, therefore, do penance. "Sins, whether great or small, cannot pass unpunished. Either man himself must atone for them, or they will be punished by God on the Day of Judgment." St. Augustine. But "in many things we all offend." James iii, 2. On this account we all are obliged to do penance, especially those who have sinned grievously; and how great is their number! "Let us be penitent; and with many tears let us beg His pardon." Judith viii, 14.

J. Schuen.

Second Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

On this Sunday the Holy Church begins to invite her children to accompany her Lord in his public life. After John the Baptist had given public testimony of Jesus, he selected his first disciples, namely Simon, Andrew, John, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew). He had manifested to them his omniscience, so that Nathanael could not refrain himself from saying: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Wherefore Jesus had said: "Greater things than these shalt thou see." John i, 35-51. "On the third day" occasion offered which his loving heart decided to be a fitting opportunity on which to show forth his power, and thus to fulfill his promise. The occasion was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. This marriage is the subject of to-day's Gospel. It is remarkable for three prominent incidents: (1) Jesus is guest at a marriage. (2) At this marriage the wine was failing. (3) Jesus changes water into wine.

I.

JESUS IS GUEST AT A MARRIAGE.

1. "At that time: There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there." Because Cana, a small village of Galilee, was situated near Nazareth, and Mary was there, and Jesus, and his disciples were also invited, some of the Holy Fathers conjecture, with much plausibility, that the bridegroom was a near relation of the Blessed Virgin, perhaps Simon, the future Apostle, who was from Cana, and was "a brother," i. e., a cousin, of the Lord; so that Mary was induced by her tender affection for her kinsfolk to go to the wedding. For she was also a model to us in her love for relations, whom she loved truly and sincerely, but for God's sake, not on account of flesh and blood.

2. "And Jesus was also invited, and his disciples, to the marriage." Jesus himself deigned to come to the wedding: (*a.*) Because he intended to perform his first miracle, and to prove himself as a teacher sent by God. (*b.*) He intended to proclaim conjugal union as a sacred union, instituted by God himself, and to manifest his resolution to restore its primitive dignity.

Happy couple of Cana who had Jesus and Mary as guests under their roof on their day of honor! Jesus and Mary are still invited to their wedding by those who have not trampled under foot their innocence; as also by those who receive worthily the holy sacraments of penance and of the Altar, that they may receive, with a clear conscience, the sacrament of matrimony. Jesus and Mary are still the friends of all married people, who in their state of life never set aside honesty and chastity, who pray together, and receive frequently together Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament.

II.

THE WINE IS FAILING.

1. "The wine failing, the Mother of Jesus said to him: They have no wine." Jesus wanted to be asked by his Mother to perform his first miracle, in order to exhort us to put our confidence in his merciful Mother.—At the same time, we have a glimpse at the generous and charitable heart of Mary, who proffers help sooner than it is asked for.—Since our Lady provides even for temporal things, those persons act prudently, who choose the holy Mother of God as the patroness of their families, and pay her homage by saying daily prayers in her honor, and by receiving the holy sacraments on the festival days of our Lady. Would to God that the number of these devout families might continually increase!

How often may she have spoken to the heart of her Divine Son in our behalf when an infinitely more generous wine was failing, the wine that inebriates hearts, the wine of divine love!

And how unbounded is her confidence of being heard by her Son, may be known from her manner of praying. Only to manifest the need is to expect instant succour.

2. "And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come." Jesus seems to decline the granting of the petition in reproachful words; but, in fact, he neither reproaches his Mother, nor declines her petition. It is evident that Mary did not interpret his words in this sense, for she turned to those in attendance, as if knowing that her petition had been granted, and said to them: "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." Nor do the words, "Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour has not yet come," contain a reproach. Jesus means to say, that he works his miracles, not moved by love of his mother, but by the infinitely perfect love that originates in God. The hour appointed by my Heavenly Father, when the miracle will produce its full effect, when the failing of wine will be noticed by all, is not come as yet.

3. "His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." Her confidence is not confounded, but she even knows the manner in which her Son will help, to-wit, by changing water into wine.—Her words, however, are ever true and efficacious. If she had so great power, when on earth, how much more efficacious is her intercession now, when she partakes of the glory of her Son! But at the same time she says to us: "Trust in my intercession," yet do not suppose that God is to dispense in regard to you with the law of co-operation. "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye."

III.

JESUS CHANGES WATER INTO WINE.

1. The quantity of wine into which Jesus changed the water surpassed by far the momentary want, so that the married couple received some relief in their poverty.

"Fill the water-pots with water." The Son of God, who created the world out of nothing, could have also made wine out of nothing; but he preferred to change water into wine, because by his first miracle he intended to prefigure and confirm his last miracle, the changing of wine into his precious Blood.

When the waiters had filled them up to the brim, "Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast," etc. In this way Jesus made the miracle known to all those who were invited.

2. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him." He manifested his divine glory, by working miracles, not like the prophets by a transferred, but by his own power. At this manifestation of his glory, his disciples believed in him as the Son of God; not as though they had not believed in him from the beginning of their calling, but because their faith was confirmed by so clear a manifestation of his divine power.

Our faith, also, in Jesus Christ is confirmed by this and other miracles. Especially, our faith in the sanctity of matrimony. Matrimony was the first institution established by God for the sake of men. The Son of God honored it by his first miracle. It ought, therefore, to be entered upon with a holy intention, and when once contracted, should be kept holy.

Let us never forget that the miracle which confirmed the faith of the disciples of Jesus was wrought by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. As she co-operated, by her consent, in the work of our Redemption, being the one great grace from which all other graces proceed, so all the special graces promoting our sanctification are conferred on us through her, so that next to God there is no one neither in heaven nor on earth, whom we honor and love more than the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, the Mother of fair love.

VIII.

(*Feast of the Sacred Name of Jesus.*)

VICTORY AND TRIUMPH, OR DEFEAT AND RUIN THROUGH THE SACRED NAME OF JESUS.

"Two kinds of love build up two cities. Jerusalem is built by the love of God; Babylon by the love of the world. Let, then, every one discover the real object of his love, and he will ascertain of which he is a citizen." St. Augustine. Babylon, the confluence of earthly wealth, of worldly greatness and luxury, denounced by the prophets, (Jerem. L and li) is the figure of the

world, which is seated in wickedness (I John v,19). Jerusalem, the city of peace, is a figure of the Holy Church. The founder and ruler of spiritual Babylon is Lucifer, "the prince of this world." Spiritual Jerusalem has been built by the Son of God "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii, 20). God himself is the King of this city. "I will be their God; and they shall be my people." II Cor. vi, 16. As, in olden times, there was incessant war between Jerusalem and Babylon, so a spiritual war is continually raging between church and world, between Christ and Belial. (II Cor. vi, 14.) The children of the world contend under the banner of Satan; the children of God, under the banner of the Sacred Name of Jesus. This combat and its issue constitute the subject of our present meditation.

I.

TEMPORAL VICTORY IS IN STORE FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD; TEMPORAL DEFEAT FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

We are pledged under oath by the holy sacraments of baptism, and by the other sacraments, to combat under, and for the Sacred Name of Jesus; so that no choice is left but perseverance unto victory, or desertion. This Sacred Name "is for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many in Israel" (Lk. ii, 34).

A. Those combating under this Sacred Name gain interior victory; those who combat against it, suffer an interior defeat, as it is described by the prophet Malachias (iv, 2): "Unto you that fear my name, the Sun of justice shall arise * * * And you shall tread down the wicked, when they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet."

1. This *temporal interior victory* consists in this, that in Jerusalem, in the children of the Church, there is spiritual life and light. "Unto you that fear my name, the Sun of justice shall arise."

a. In the rays of this Sun the original image of God is restored in the children of the Church. "You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ." I Cor. vi, 11. Thus, in the rays of the vernal sun, the crust of ice is melted away, and the earth is restored to its former beauty.

b. Life, growth, and prosperity, are granted to them. "I am come that they may have light, and may have it more abundantly." John x, 10. In a similar manner, the rays of the sun awake life and growth throughout all nature.

c. An intimate union is established between Christ and his adherents, by virtue of which they bear much fruit. "I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." John xv, 5. In a similar manner, the sun communicates his warmth to the earth, which receives life in consequence of this union.

d. They walk in the supernatural light of faith, knowing the eternal truth, and striving after justice. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii, 12. In a similar manner, the sun sheds bright day over the world.

2. *The interior defeat* of the children of the world, under the banner of the prince of the world, consists in this, that in Babylon, in the midst of the children of this world, death and darkness prevail.

a. Under the cold ice-crust of unbelief, and under the abomination of desolation of sin, the image of God is buried.

b. They are spiritually dead because deprived of the life of grace.

c. Therefore they are not able to bear living fruit, to perform works of virtue and justice.

d. And what is still more deplorable, they are deprived of the light of knowledge. God is unknown to them; everlasting reward and punishment seems to them an impossibility; Christ is to them no Saviour; the Church the work of men; virtue and vice are to them a mere conceit. On the day of judgment they will be undeceived. "We have erred from the way of truth; and the light of justice has not shined unto us; and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us." Wisd. v, 6.

3. How magnificent a victory, how terrible a defeat! Like eagles, the children of light soar heavenward, trampling the world and its allurements under their feet. But the designs of the wicked will come to naught, and the word of the prophet will be fulfilled: "You shall tread down the wicked, when they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet." Malachias iv, 2. Verily, "there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved," but the adorable, divine name of Jesus.

B. No less certain is exterior victory, or exterior defeat. For it is written: "God hath given Him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell." Philip. ii, 9.

1. This *exterior defeat* has been experienced!

a. By individuals, who were inimical to his Name.

For no sooner had our Saviour received the name of Jesus, than the most cruel war was inaugurated against this most sacred name.

Herod, the murderer of innocent children, became a prey to vermin and an abomination to men.

Herod Antipas, his son, who had a mind to kill Jesus (Lk. xiii, 31), and under whose reign this Sacred Name was affixed to the cross, was deprived of his inheritance, and was driven into exile.

Pilate, who had branded this Name before the whole world, was banished and committed suicide.

Judas, who betrayed this Name, hanged himself.

Caiphas, who pronounced sentence against this Name, was deprived of his dignity of high-priest.

Verily, a name above every name.

b. By nations.

The Jews, to whom this Name was a scandal, were deprived of temple and altar, of priesthood and royalty, and have been dispersed throughout the earth.

The Greek and Roman Gentiles, to whom this name was a folly, have disappeared from the face of the earth.

The very names of the heretics and infidels who attempted to destroy this glorious Name are buried in oblivion, whilst this Name is still adored and glorified.

2. *The exterior victory* of the Church through this holy Name is exceedingly glorious.

a. She was established and spread by twelve poor fishermen, who in this Name converted the nations, so that the Name of Jesus, like a pillar of fire, pointed out to nations and princes the way through the desert of this life, into the Promised Land.

b. The life of her children was a victorious combat against the allurements of the world, (Lk. ix. 23. Mt. xi, 21) and against the concupiscence of the flesh. (Gal. v, 24; vi, 14.)

c. No nation ever lost its prosperity and fame amongst other nations, whilst it embraced this holy Name. But the forsaking of the Name of Jesus has ended in the degradation of nations.

II.

EXTERNAL TRIUMPH IS THE PORTION OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD; EXTERNAL RUIN THE PORTION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

1. *External triumph*, "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x, 13.

a. Every one will be glorified in the ranks in which he combated under the banner of this holy Name, in the ranks of martyrs, confessors, or virgins; each victory will be rewarded by a special crown, each affliction by a special joy. All "shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads." Apoc. xxii, 4.

b. All the Angels and Saints will join together in praising this adorable divine Name. "Praise the Lord, ye children; praise ye the name of the Lord." "Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth now and for ever." Ps. cxii, 1.

2. The *external ruin* of the enemies of the divine Name is also foretold. "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord's indignation

shall come forth, and a tempest shall break out and come upon the head of the wicked * * * And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall never be forgotten." Jerem. xxiii, 19, 40. "The wicked shall be destroyed from the earth." Prov. ii, 22. They "shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." Mk. ix, 43.

Oh! that every one of you would take to heart the words of the Apostle: "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved!" Oh! that every one would cling to the banner of this holy Name, "and put it as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm." Cant. viii, 6.

G. Patiss.

Third Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Lord Jesus having just finished his sermon on the mountain, came down, and wished to go to the city of Capharnaum. Great multitudes, attracted by his heavenly doctrine, followed him. For simple-minded, humble, souls take pleasure in the word of God, whilst God resists the proud. "Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude, that knoweth not the law, are accursed." John vii, 48. Such was the language of the learned men in Israel. Jesus, in his infinite bounty, strengthens the faith of the people by working two miracles on his way to Capharnaum. Let these two miracles, the cleansing of the leper, and the healing of the servant of the Centurion, be the subject of our present meditation.

I.

JESUS CLEANSES A LEPER.

1. "And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." This leper met Jesus close by Capharnum, as those contaminated with this contagious disease were not allowed to dwell in a city. St. Luke describes him as "full of leprosy," covered all over with it: his face, his hands and feet, his entire body. A miserable object of compassion! No sooner did he see Jesus coming than he hurried to meet him, and adored him, "falling on his knees," as St. Mark says, nay "falling on his face," as St. Luke says. And lifting up his pitiful voice, he cried out: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." By these words it is plainly indicated that he adored Jesus with supreme adoration due to God alone; for they are a clear profession of his omnipotence, attributing to him the control of the laws of nature.

Leprosy has ever been regarded as a type of sin. How dreadful this disease was may be judged from Lev. xiii, 44:

"Whosoever shall be defiled with the leprosy, and is separated by the judgment of the priest, shall have his clothes hanging loose, his head bare, his mouth covered with a cloth, and he shall cry out that he is defiled and unclean." Is it not the leprosy of sin that disfigures the divine image in our soul, rendering her an abomination in the eyes of God and his holy Angels, and infecting innocent souls? We all are guilty of many sins.

Let us, lepers as we are, go to Jesus, adore and implore him: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Let us come to Jesus with great reverence, especially in church, in imitation of the leper, who fell on his face. Let the short, but ardent, prayer of the leper also be an exhortation for us, to say frequently ejaculatory prayers from a loving heart, that thus we may comply with the demand of the Lord to pray *incessantly*.

2. "And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And his leprosy was cleansed." St. Mark added, that Jesus had compassion on him. Whilst the leper was an abomination to others, Jesus touched him with his divine hand. He touched him also in order to show, that he was above the ceremonial law, which forbade coming in contact with lepers; and that a healing power proceeded from his adorable Flesh.—This is another cause of consolation to the sinner. Although he should be despised by every one on account of his vices, Jesus does not reject him, if he return with a contrite heart, and entreat him to make him clean.

The prophets and apostles also wrought miracles, but in the name of God, not in their own name. Jesus stretches forth his hand, and says: "I will." This is the language of God, who called the world into being by his almighty power.

3. "And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." The prohibition to divulge this miracle, and the command to go forthwith to Jerusalem (St. Mark i, 43, says: "And he strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away,") are explained by the intention to prevent a greater commotion among the people, and to observe the pre-

cepts of the law, according to which no leper was allowed to converse with his fellowmen before he had been declared clean by the priest.

By sending the cleansed leper to the priests, Jesus intimated the necessity, in every case, of subjecting our sins to the power of the keys held by the priests of the New Covenant; even although we should have been already cleansed by a perfect contrition.

II.

JESUS HEALS THE SERVANT OF THE CENTURION.

1. The Centurion sets a good example by his solicitude for his servant. According to Luke vii, he first sends his friends, "the ancients of the Jews," to plead for him; and when he heard that Jesus was coming, he went out to meet Him. Would that every head of a house would show the same solicitude for his own family as this pagan Centurion showed for his servant!

It is remarkable that Jesus at first refused to grant the petition of that Gentile woman mentioned Mark vii, who prayed in behalf of her daughter. But we should take into consideration that the Centurion, like Cornelius, had a *meritum de congruo*, the ancients saying: "He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." Lk. vii, 4. From this we learn how acceptable it is to God to provide for his house.

On another occasion, Jesus was entreated by a ruler to come to his house and heal his *son*. Jesus did not go, but healed him from a distance. The Centurion asks him in behalf of his servant, and He goes forthwith to his house. For "God is no respecter of persons." Act. x, 34.

2. "And the Centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof," etc. Let us admire in this noble Centurion his profound humility, by which he was rendered worthy to believe the mystery of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Father having hid these things from the wise and prudent, and having revealed them to little ones. Mt. xi, 25.

That he believed firmly in the divinity of Jesus Christ, is evident from his proclaiming Him omnipotent. Only say the word (a Hebrew phrase, signifying, only command it), and my servant shall be healed. I obey the commands of my superiors, and my soldiers and servants instantly obey my bidding. Thou who art Sovereign Lord of all things, commandest diseases and bodily infirmities, and they disappear at Thy word.

3. "And Jesus, hearing this, marvelled," etc. Jesus expressed wonder at this remarkable manifestation of faith on the part of a Gentile, either because now he saw by experience what he had ever known by his omniscience, (St. Thomas of Aquino) or because he would express merely externally His praise and commendation of the Centurion's faith. (St. Augustine.)

When Jesus says, that he had not found so great faith in Israel, he does not compare the faith of the Centurion with the faith of the favored few immediately around him, such as the Apostles, but with the people of Israel in general.

"And I say to you," etc. The Centurion, being a Gentile, our Redeemer takes occasion to refer to the vocation of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. Multitudes of the Gentiles, gathered together in the kingdom of Christ, shall sit down with the fathers of faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at the royal banquet, whilst the born children of the kingdom shall be cast out of the enlightened banquet hall into the exterior darkness—poena damni ——; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth —poena sensus.—O infinitely sweet joys of heaven! what could be too arduous which will enable us to partake of you? O infinitely terrible torments of hell! when compared with you, what are all torments and afflictions on earth?

Jesus healed the servant of the Centurion, according as he had believed. Let us also have recourse to Jesus in all our trials and adversities. If our just petitions be not granted, it is because we lack confidence in the Lord.

VIII.

FORTITUDE, BEAUTY, AND JOY OF ST. AGNES.

(St. Agnes, Virgin, Martyr.)

"Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all." Prov. xxxi, 29. We may apply these words to St. Agnes, the Virgin and Martyr, in comparison with the other virgins and martyrs, whom she surpassed by the peculiar circumstances of her martyrdom, and by other privileges. The latter may be expressed in the words of Holy Scripture: "Strength and beauty are her clothing: and she shall laugh in the latter day." Let us meditate on them, for the honor of God and our own edification.

I.

HER FORTITUDE.

As regards age and sex, Agnes was very feeble; but even in this fragile vessel the power of grace and the fervor of divine charity were manifested by the display of superhuman strength and courage.

1. She resisted the world and Satan, who endeavored to inflame in her heart the fire of earthly love.

a. Procopius, the Son of Symphronius, the prefect of the city, demanded her hand; no doubt an honorable offer in the eyes of the world.

b. "Christ is my Spouse," she answered; "He chose me first, and His I will be. He set a seal upon my face, that I might admit no love but His. He pledged my troth with the ring of faith, and adorned me with the necklace of infinite beauty. Having loved Him, I am chaste; having touched Him, I am pure; having received Him, I am a virgin."

2. She did not fear the flames of fire that were enkindled to shake her constancy.

a. Symphronius, whose son had been struck with sudden death, when he approached the virgin with an ill intention, feared for his life; and he commissioned Aspasius to continue the pro-

ceedings against Agnes. Aspasius condemned her to the flames of fire.

b. Full of courage and even joy, Agnes ascends the pile; but in the midst of the flames the holy child remains unhurt. "I praise Thee, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, because through Thy Son the fire was extinguished on my side," was the prayer of St. Agnes. "Strength is her clothing." Prov. xxxi, 25.

3. Have we also strength,

a. To combat and overcome our passions? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24.

b. To bear adversities, persecutions, contempt, mockeries, for the sake of God? "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mt. v, 10.

II.

HER BEAUTY.

She did not regard the beauty of her body, and wished that "the body which could be loved by human eyes against her will, might perish." (St. Ambrose.) She prized more the beauty of her soul, which far surpassed the beauty of her body. The most distinguishing traits of her beauteous soul were:

1. *Angelic purity.* "I am betrothed to Him to whom the Angels minister, whose beauty sun and moon admire." Such was her answer to offers of marriage. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men." Wisd. iv, 1.

2. *Her tender and fervent love for Jesus.* "What have I in heaven? And besides thee what do I desire upon earth? For thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever." Ps. lxxii, 25. "I desire Thee with all my heart, Thee in the innermost of my soul."

3. *Her unbounded confidence in Jesus.*

a. She entrusted her virginity to his protection, when she made the virginal vow.

b. Jesus protected her in all assaults against her virginal purity, as for instance, in the house of ill-fame, into which she had been dragged, where she was protected in a miraculous manner. When her clothes were stripped off, and she had to stand in the street before a pagan crowd, she said: "Christ will guard his own." So it was; for the crowd were touched by her innocence, and turned away their eyes. And one young man who dared to gaze at the innocent child with immodest eyes, was struck blind by a flash of light. "Thou hast been a helper and protector to me, and hast preserved my body from destruction." Ecclus. li, 2. "Beauty is her clothing." Prov. xxxi, 25.

4. Would that our souls might be clothed with the same beauty.

a. Purity is the fairest adornment of the soul, especially the soul of the young. Without it "favor is deceitful and beauty is vain." Prov. xxxi, 30. Let us invoke St. Agnes, that we may never be deprived of it.

b. The love of God, the love of Jesus, is the most charming trait of a beauteous soul. Love is the queen of all virtues; and if friendship causes friends to be of one mind and to imitate each other, our souls will reflect the divine beauty of Him who is the fairest of the sons of men.

c. Let us also foster a filial confidence in God, in Jesus. Confidence augments our strength. "Thou art my protector, and my refuge: my God, in him will I trust." Ps. xc, 2. "Have confidence; I have overcome the world." John xvi, 33.

III.

HER HOLY JOY.

Is it possible for a soul encompassed by persecutions, and oppressed by pain and torture, to be susceptible of joy? Of the purest and holiest joy, as we see in the life of St. Agnes. "She shall laugh in the latter day." Prov. xxxi, 25.

St. Agnes was full of holy joy:

1. In her life, the joy

a. Of innocence. "A secure mind is like a continual

feast." Prov. xv, 15. "A clear conscience is a great wealth." St. Bernard.

b. In Jesus her Spouse, and in his holy doctrine. "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." Ps. lxxxiii, 3. "Thy word was to me a joy and gladness of my heart." Jerem. xv, 16.

2. In her torture, joy

a. At the visible protection of God in the house of ill-fame, in the midst of the flames.

b. At the conversion of many caused by great miracles.

3. In her death, which was to her

a. The end of all dangers and temptations to which the soul is exposed in the mortal body.

b. The beginning of her beatitude, by being for ever united with her heavenly Spouse. Verily, she laughed in the latter day.

4. Oh! that this joy might be our portion also in life, in tribulations, and in death! "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice." Philip. iv, 4.

The holy virgin and martyr says to every one of us with a voice descending from heaven: "Behold what I longed for, I now behold; what I hoped, I now possess; I am united in heaven with Him whom, when sojourning on earth, I loved with all my heart."

Nuet.

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

All deeds and miracles of our Saviour are profoundly instructive; they are as it were doctrines represented under a material form. This is especially the case in regard to the miracle related in to-day's Gospel. We read (1) of the tempest rising; (2) of the fear of the disciples; (3) of Jesus commanding the tempest to be still.

I.

THE ARISING TEMPEST.

1. His disciples followed him into the ship, for it was for their sake that Jesus was about to perform a stupendous wonder. There were other ships sailing along with Peter's ship. (Mk. iv, 35.) "And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but he was asleep—in the hinder part of the ship, upon a pillow." Mk. iv, 38. Jesus slept a natural sleep, brought on by his own voluntary act, with the view of showing his almighty power and also of confirming the faith of his disciples.

2. This world—what else is it but a turbulent sea, which is never free from tempests? And our holy Catholic Church, what else is she but a ship covered with the waves of hatred, and assailed by the storms of persecution? But have confidence, the Lord Jesus is in the ship, and "behold, he shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel." Ps. cxx, 4.

The Church was persecuted in her very beginning by the Jews, then by the Pagans, during the three centuries of the martys; then by heretics and Turks, and in our times by the secret societies and the modern Moloch, the *State*.

Our Lord seems to sleep sometimes and permits persecution to assail his Church, even, at times, with such violence as to threaten her utter destruction, but only to test the faith and

heroism of his followers, and to render the victory more brilliant. For in his own good time, He whom the sea and the winds must obey awakes from his sleep, allays the storm, and restores tranquillity. Let us, therefore, have unbounded confidence in the midst of the storm which assails St. Peter's ship in our times, when the devils and the powers of this world combine to destroy her. Let us cry out with confidence: "Lord, save us, we perish."

II.

THE FEAR OF THE DISCIPLES.

1. There are timid souls, souls of little faith, who, seeing the apparent success of the Church's enemies at this moment, fear for her safety. We have, however, no reason to be discouraged. History records many other atrocious persecutions, especially by the adherents of Arianism, and, in our own times, by the usurper of the throne of France, against which the Church ultimately prevailed. How great was the fear of the disciples on the sea, when the tempest arose! They thought they would be overwhelmed in the waves. Agitated by fear they awake Jesus, saying: "Lord save us, we perish." According to St. Mark, they were in so great despondency, and had grown so impatient, as to say besides: "Master doth it not concern thee, that we perish?" The danger was great indeed, "for the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was filled." Mk. iv, 37. The disciples showed by their excessive fear, as if the Lord were unconcerned about them, how weak their faith was. The knowledge that they had on board the Lord God should have been sufficient to banish from their hearts all fear of the hurricane. Wherefore Jesus reprimands them, saying: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" If they believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ, they ought to have known, that God does not sleep, although his adopted human body be fatigued.

2. What shall I say, therefore, to those who fear for the holy Catholic Church? What else but what the Lord said to his disciples: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?"

Our Church has been built, not upon sand, but upon a rock, which cannot be shaken by wind or waves. For the Lord said: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mt. xvi, 18. Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? It is not by men, but by God himself, that the Christian faith is protected and preserved? For Jesus Christ, true God as the Father, has promised: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20. The same Jesus who was on board St. Peter's boat, is also in the Catholic Church. Instead of lamenting, we should with confidence cry out to him: "Lord, save us, we perish!" Tears and prayer are the weapons of the children of the Church. The Catholic Church was born out of the heart of Jesus, when he was hanging on the Cross. By cross and martyrdom she spread; by cross and martyrdom she is to be preserved to the consummation of the world, that the world may become convinced of the Church being the work of God, and not of men.

III.

JESUS STILLS THE TEMPEST.

1. When the danger was greatest "rising up He commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm." Jesus shows himself to be Him by whom all things were made. He made his Angels spirits; and his ministers a burning fire. "He looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble: he toucheth the mountains, and they smoke." Ps. ciii, 4, 32. He commands the sterile fig-tree to wither away; he says to the deaf ear, Be opened, and to the corpse in the grave, Lazarus, come forth; and his will is obeyed. He commands the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. And man, a worm crawling in the dust, dares to revolt against God!

2. The ship of St. Peter has stood the test of time for eighteen centuries. Let the kings of the earth stand up, and the princes meet together, against the Lord, and against his Christ, He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them; and the Lord, shall deride them. Ps. ii.

But the Lord will not rise up, before the storm has reached its height, in order that all, perceiving the hand of the Almighty, may exclaim: "This is the Lord's doing; and it is wonderful in our eyes." Ps. cxvii, 23.

Like the Catholic Church, so every individual soul must be tried, cleansed, and sanctified, by tribulations. Therefore "be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on." Mt. vi, 25. Be not terrified by the many storms of temptation; for "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." I Cor. x, 13. Do what is in you, that you may fulfill the will of God, not being put to shame by the winds and the sea, which obey Him.

VIII.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE.

The conversion of Saul is considered by the Holy Church as an event of so great importance, that she devotes a special day to its celebration. Let us meditate on this conversion, as it is related Act. ix, 1-22.

I.

PAUL BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.

"Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high-priest and asked of him letters" etc. Act. i, 1, 2.

1. What was the cause of this sanguinary disposition? St. Paul himself explains that it arose from his prejudiced education, in consequence of which he became a blind zealot. Act. xxii, 3. We see from this how much depends on education.

2. Where was he led to by this cruel disposition of mind? The more susceptible and energetic a disciple is, the deeper and more lasting are the impressions made on his mind. He avows himself to have surpassed many of his contemporaries in passion-

ate zeal, and in persecuting the disciples of Jesus unto death. Gal. i, 13. Act. xxii, 4, 5. He took an active part in the stoning of St. Stephen, and to-day we see him on his way to Damascus, to bring the brethren bound thence to Jerusalem, that they might be punished. Act. xxii, 5.

Saul was under the impression that he was striving for the integrity of the law of God, for a good cause, as Jesus had foretold: "The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God." John xvi, 2. Therefore, presume not to judge the adversaries of your faith; perhaps they are more excusable for their error, than you for your sins; may be, that the hour is near at hand, when, like Saul, they will be visited by divine grace.—You should rather fervently pray for them, as St. Stephen prayed for Saul, and by his prayer gained him for Christ.

II.

CHRIST'S APPARITION, AND SAUL'S CONVERSION.

(Act. ix, 3-7; xxii, 6-10; xxvi, 13-18.)

The "light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun" (Act. xxiv, 13), symbolizes the infinite light of grace, by which alone, both to the whole human race and to individuals, the way of salvation is made known. Whoever is deprived of this light from above remains blind at mid-day.

2. His falling on the ground symbolizes self-humiliation, and the consciousness of the nothingness of one's own self, which must needs precede and accompany the supernatural enlightening of grace.

3. The voice from heaven: "Saul! Saul!" The repeated call intimates the deep sleep of sin from which Jesus was to awake him. "Why dost thou persecute me?" Where is there just cause for persecuting the Church of Christ? By combating against faith, virtue, Church, priesthood, and devout Christians, not only are men presecuted but Jesus Christ himself, whom we are to meet one day as our Judge.

4. "Who art thou, Lord? I am Jesus (according to Act. xxii, 8, 'Jesus of Nazareth,') whom thou persecutest." Whoever

is on the way to conversion, wishes, first of all, to know the Lord, whom he heretofore persecuted. He is no longer scandalized by His abasement, although He calls himself only "Jesus of Nazareth." He is so much moved by grace that it is hard for him "to kick against the goad"—to stifle further the remorse of conscience, and the strong voice of grace.

5. "And he, trembling and astonished, said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such are the words of the truly converted sinner, who trembling before the divine majesty, justice, and wisdom, and overwhelmed with his own misery caused by sin, wants to know the will of God, in order to fulfill it. He inquires not only what he has to believe, "Who art thou, Lord?" but immediately thereupon, what he has to do? Thus, all holiness ought to begin with faith and lead to active charity.

6. The commission of Christ. We learn this from Act. xxvi, 16-18, where we are informed that the Lord made known to him his call to be the Apostle of the Gentiles; but sent him first to Ananias, to be informed by him concerning the will of God. Every one ought to be instructed by men, and guided by the teaching of the Church. Such is the ordering of Divine Providence.

III.

ST. PAUL AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

1. *His blindness.* "His eyes being open, he saw nothing," in order to atone for his spiritual blindness, and to detach himself from earthly affairs, in order that he might pay the more attention to the interior light; an example which ought to be followed by every convert.

2. *His preparation for his new vocation.* He fasted during three days and nights of incessant prayer. (Verses 9 and 11.) This is an exhortation to keep our mind recollected, and to meditate on the life, death and resurrection of our Saviour, as St. Paul certainly did.

3. *His reception into the Church.* It was performed through

Ananias, "a man according to the law, having a good character from all the Jews" (Act xxii, 12). Informed by Jesus that Saul was a vessel of election to him, he first healed his corporal blindness, and then, by baptism, his spiritual blindness,—sin. Thus God accomplishes by men, and external means, what he has commenced by his grace.

4. *His burning zeal.* V. 19-22. When reconciled with God, the converted Paul rejoiced and took meat. He conversed no longer with his former friends, but with the disciples. Forthwith he gave public testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ.

"Saul increased much more in strength." In a similar way, every one of you should increase daily in grace and virtue, instead of frustrating all the fruit of conversion by relapses.

Massl.

Fifth Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

Our Saviour himself gave an explanation of the parable *of the cockle*. "When he had sent away the multitudes, he went into the house; and his disciples came to him, saying: Explain to us the parable of the cockle of the field. He made answer, and said to them: He that soweth good seed, is the Son of man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the Angels. Even as cockle, therefore, is gathered up, and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send his Angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Mt. xiii, 36-43. Let us consider now both the wheat and the cockle (1) as regards the sowing; (2) as regards the growth; (3) as regards the harvest.

I.

THE SOWING.

What difference is there between the wheat and the cockle as regards the sowing? The good seed is sown by the owner of the field; the cockle is sown by his enemy.

1. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field." Jesus Christ himself is this man. His field is the whole world; the good seed are true Christians, the children of the kingdom (of his Church), whom he sanctifies through his holy sacraments, instructs through his Gospel, and whom he makes grow in good works by his grace. Whenever a

child is baptized, whenever a sinner is absolved of his sins in the confessional, Jesus Christ sows new seed in the field of the Church that it may spring up and grow for the heavenly garner. Rejoice, ye innocent souls, who never offended God by a grievous sin, and ye penitent souls who are cleansed through the sacrament of penance, you are a seed sown by Jesus Christ, a plant planted by the heavenly husbandman in his own vineyard. Beware of sin, lest it change you into cockle.

2. The cockle is sown by the enemy. "While men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way." "The cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that soweth them is the devil." They are those who adulterate the doctrine of Jesus Christ, thus being the sons of the father of lie. For this reason St. Polycarp called Marcion the first-born of Satan. The cockle are also those who profess the true faith, but do not live according to the faith. Oh! ye who do not lead a Christian life, how much do I pity you! Christ himself calls you the children of the wicked one.

"*When men were asleep.*" The Superior must watch over his subjects, parents over their children. Woe to them, if through their fault a soul should be lost! The Lord will require her at their hands. Ezech. xxxii, 8. Every one must watch over his own self, over his senses, thoughts, and inclinations; he must watch in prayer. "Watch ye, and pray."

II.

THE GROWTH.

1. "And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle." As for growth, there is no difference between the wheat and the cockle. Whilst the Christian religion spread throughout the world, heresies had their adherents too. As Christ sent his Apostles to spread truth and virtue, so Satan had his satellites to preach lies and vice. At all times the cockle and the wheat grew together, the good and the wicked were mixed.

2. "The servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and

gather it up?" By "*servants*" are undertood those who, agitated by a false zeal, would have no wicked men in the world, or are indignant at seeing things prosper with them. Our Lord teaches here th t his Church numbers not only just, but also unjust men among her members, and that their separation is reserved for the Day of Judgment.

God suffers the wicked and protects their lives, as St. Augustine says, either for their own sake, or for the sake of the just. Because God is not only just, but also merciful, therefore he does not cut down the sterile fig-tree the first year, but waits a second year.

Who could have known but God alone, that Saul would one day be St. Paul, that Mary Magdalene would one day be the foremost of the disciples of the Lord, that Augustine, the great sinner, would be a light shining throughout all Christendom?—If the sinner should not be converted, he promotes the virtues of the just, patience, peaceableness, meekness, love of enemies. Our holy Church could not boast of her many children wearing the martyr's crown, unless God had suffered the Neros and Diocletians.

And if God should withdraw earthly goods from the wicked, and give them to his beloved children, virtue would, with many, have for its motive the possession of temporal things, and the just would be in great danger of overvaluing and desiring them with avidity; and thus of plunging themselves into a terrible danger of losing heaven by an inordinate avidity for the goods of this world.

III.

THE HARVEST.

In the time of the harvest, the great difference between the good seed and the cockle will appear; the cockle will be bound in bundles to burn, but the wheat will be gathered into the barn of the Lord.

1. The Angels will be the ministering spirits who will execute the sentence pronounced by God. And one of these Angels

stands continually in our presence. Overwhelming must be our terror at his aspect, if we should have despised his warnings.

2. The just will be separated from among the wicked, from their revilers and persecutors — an eternal separation. The wicked will be deprived of their heretofore consoling friends, and separated from their parents, brothers, sisters. Vide Mt. xxiv, 40, 41.

3. Those guilty of the same crimes will be associated, that they may suffer the same kind of punishment; they will be bound in bundles; the proud with the proud, the impure with the impure, etc.

4. The wicked will suffer a punishment represented by the most dreadful punishment known here below—the torment of fire.

5. The just will be rewarded with an infinite reward. They will suffer no longer, will be at rest, at home, and "shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

And when will this Day of the harvest come? Although "of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the Angels of heaven, but the Father alone" (Mt. xxiv, 36); yet we know that our harvest depends on the hour in which death will seize upon us. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

VIII.

(*St. Francis of Sales, Confessor.*)

HIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS BY THE VIRTUE OF MEEKNESS.

"Learn of me, because I am meek." St. Francis endeavored all his lifetime to fulfill the above exhortation of the Lord, so that meekness is his characteristic virtue. As priest and bishop, as Apostle and guide of spiritual life, he is the most amiable model of Christian meekness. By this virtue he achieved great things:

I.

THE VICTORY OF THE FAITH.

1. St. Francis obtained the virtue of meekness

a. By earnest reflection.

In France, civil war was raging under Henry III. for the pretended cause of religion, but in truth for that of ambition. St. Francis saw secular and ecclesiastical authority combined in vain to suppress the new error; he became convinced that nothing but meekness and charity could prevail against it. "Without meekness it is impossible to please men, as it is impossible without faith to please God." St. Bernard.

b. By prolonged and arduous combats.

By nature he was vehement and lively, so that his meekness was nothing less than a victory of grace. His bile was found as if petrified, in consequence of his incessant exertions to overcome the passion of wrath. When once asked why he endured contumelies with so great patience, he answered: "Why, do you think, I should spill, in one moment, the few drops of meekness which I have gathered during twenty-two years?"

2. He exercised this virtue in his vocation.

a. He devoted himself to the refutation of the Calvinistic heresy by instruction and conviction. It was as arduous as it was dangerous. Along the edge of abysses he traveled over the mountains of Chablais; and in spite of the rebellious people he entered the capital town of Tonon, to begin there his mission.

b. He overcame by his admirable meekness all hatred, calumny, and even assassination. "Friends," he once said to intended assassins, "do not seize upon a man, who offended neither you nor any one else, and is willing every moment to give his life for you."

3. He produced the most marvellous effects by this virtue.

a. He reconciled thousands of heretics by his meekness. During the four years of his sojourn in Chablais the number of Catholics increased from seven to 72,000, so that Calvinism had entirely disappeared. Cardinal Perrone used to say: "If nothing else were required but to refute the Calvinists, I should hope to bring it about; but in order to convert them, one must send them to Francis of Sales."

b. Nevertheless, however meek he was, he was never feeble or timid; but maintained his right and dignity, and made, when necessary, firm resistance. "You will never deter me from asserting the rights of the Church," he said to the magistrate of Tonon; "and if excommunication be necessary, I am to pronounce it."

4. Let us learn from St. Francis to be meek in correcting those who have fallen; and in our conduct toward our enemies and offenders; and truth will overcome error.

II.

THE VICTORY OF VIRTUE.

1. Only by meekness are men regained for virtue. This is the spirit of Jesus Christ. "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet, and my burden light." Mt. xi, 29.

2. St. Francis was possessed of this spirit. His age was the age of spiritual decay at the royal courts, among a great number of the ministers of the Church, and among the people. His meekness, wherein he exemplified the true charms of a virtuous life, induced many to quit their wonted path of sin.

a. By meekness he attracted sinners. When once a grievous sinner confessed to him his sins without one spark of contrition, St. Francis induced him by his own bitter tears to lead the life of a penitent.—When a person of rank had once confessed to him very humiliating sins, she asked the Saint: "What will you henceforth think of me?" Whereupon St. Francis replied: "I am to regard you as a Saint, for by the holy sacrament of penance you entered the state of sanctity." "But what are you to say regarding my past life?" "Nothing at all. As for your former sins, I shall not as much as think of them."

b. He represents virtue, in his writings, full of unction, in so amiable a manner, that one is urged to its exercise. I wish to God that his "Philothea" might be in the hands of all.

c. By instituting pious associations he carried the spirit of piety unto remote generations, as for instance confraternities with the object of adoring the most blessed Sacrament, of promoting the veneration of the Mother of God; and above all, the *Order of Visitation*, whose constitution the Church calls "*admirable*" on account of the wisdom and mildness that are displayed in it.

3. Let us learn from St. Francis, that it is not sufficient to possess the true faith without its fruit, good works. He did not content himself with preaching the true faith, but also endeavored to train up virtuous Christians. Does our conduct respond to the instruction which we have received? Or are we a cause of the word of God being blasphemed? Titus ii, 5.

How happy is our lot to have walked in the light of the true faith from our childhood, whilst so many sit in the darkness of error! Let us thank God for this ineffable grace, more by works than by words; and as we shall have professed the same faith as St. Francis, and imitated his virtues, so we shall also be partakers of his reward and glory.

J. Nickel.

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

VII.

HOMILY.

In the Gospel of this present day our Saviour likens the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard-seed and to leaven. Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes, "and without parables he did not speak to them;" that is, on the occasion when these two parables, together with many others, were delivered. The Evangelist assigns as the reason for this manner of teaching, that the prophecy (Ps. lxxvii) might be fulfilled: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world." Thus even his parables were a proof of his being the Messias. By adopting their manner of teaching, Jesus followed a usage much in vogue among the Jews. How amiable was Jesus as teacher! He did not seek his own honor by a display of oratory, but as a true friend of the people adapted his words to the mental capacity of his audience. Let us now hear what doctrines Jesus intended to impress on our mind (1) by the parable *of the grain of mustard-seed;* and (2) by the parable *of the leaven.*

I.

THE PARABLE OF THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.

1. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field." The kingdom of heaven is the Holy Church. The man who sowed it in his field, is Jesus Christ. The field is the world, in which he established his Church.

2. "Which is least indeed of all seeds," etc. It was a proverbial mode of speech among the Jews, when they spoke of anything very small, to compare it to a mustard-seed. The Founder of the Church was a man who had been crucified as a great criminal, the preaching of whose divinity was a scandal to the Jews, and a folly to the Gentiles. He chose for his Apostles twelve illiterate

fishermen, whom he sent without purse or scrip, as lambs in the midst of wolves, to preach self-denial and mortification. The Apostolic word became a tree, under the branches of which all the nations of the earth were gathered, for "their sound went over all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world."

The number of the followers of Jesus was very small in the beginning. But the Lord said: "Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." Lk. xii, 22. The grain of mustard-seed became a tree, in spite of external and internal tempests.

We are witnesses that Jesus spoke the truth when he prophesied, that his Church would one day spread throughout the world, that she would be universal or Catholic.

3. The growing of the least of all seeds unto a tree is the work of the Most High; no creature being able to effect it. The growth of the Church cannot be explained by natural causes; it is the miraculous effect of grace. Twelve fishermen could not have induced Jews and Gentiles to adore as their God Jesus the Crucified, unless the grace of God were with them. False religion can spread by the natural means of deceit, or force, or by flattering human passion. Let us be thankful to God for our vocation to the true faith, especially by living according to our faith.

II.

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

1. As the leaven, however small in quantity, makes the mass of flour with which it is mixed a wholesome nutriment for man, so, in like manner, the Gospel doctrine makes men fit subjects for heaven by its occult power to change and ferment the entire world, or all mankind, and, imbuing men with its own nature, and filling them with the love of God. As the parable of the grain of mustard-seed denoted the *external* and *visible* effects of the Gospel on the hearts of men, so does the parable of the leaven denote its *internal* and *invisible* effects, its

fermentation, and the active love of God which it produces in the hearts of men. On leaving the world our Lord entrusted this spiritual leaven to the woman who took and hid it in three measures of meal, i. e., to his Church, who holds the key opening the treasures of the Lord, and distributes the bread of life among her children. The power of this leaven is surely produced, whenever the meal receives it. But what St. John said of the time when the Saviour was born, is true of our time also. "He came unto his own, but his own received him not." To all those who receive him, he gives the power to be made the sons of God. Such is the marvellous effect of this wonderful leaven, of Christian doctrine!

2. Our Saviour, by comparing his heavenly kingdom to such things as are the product of human industry, honors and sanctifies the commonest labors of man. Thus he honors, in many parables, the farming community, and in the parable of the leaven he honors the manual labors of women. You will not be judged according to the external splendor and brilliancy of your daily pursuits, but according to the manner in which you shall have performed your daily labors, however insignificant they may be in themselves.

Only be intent upon having your daily work leavened by prayer, by the remembrance of the divine presence, and by reflecting from time to time on some words spoken by Jesus Christ or his Saints, as for instance: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." "My God and my all." "O most blessed Trinity!" "O my God, I love Thee above all things, because Thou art my infinite good!"

VIII.

(*Candlemass.*)

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS, AND CANDLEMASS.

By reminding us of the Holy Family going up into the temple according to the law of Moses, the Holy Chuch represents

these holiest persons to our eyes for imitation; and by blessing the candles, she intimates very significantly our arduous duties on earth.

I.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

When we regard the going up of the Holy Family into the temple as a symbol and model of our going up into the eternal temple of God in celestial Jerusalem, we find well symbolized whatever we ought to observe.

1. *Joseph and Mary are anxious to fulfill the law.*

a. Joseph may remind us of the conduct of our body with regard to our nobler part, the soul. As Joseph, in all things, assisted the Blessed Virgin with the greatest purity of heart; so, in a similar manner, our bodies should never contaminate our souls, but rather help them toward all virtues. "I am the Lord your God: be holy, because I am holy. Defile not your souls." Lev. xi, 44.

b. Mary, whose name may be interpreted "*illuminatrix*," reminds us of the duty of our souls to enlighten our bodies and lead them along the path of justice and honesty.

2. *They carried in their arms the Child Jesus.*

The Apostle exhorts us: "You are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." I Cor. vi, 20.

a. In what manner are we to bear Jesus, our God?

In the *soul:* our understanding should wax in divine knowledge; our memory should remember him, and our will should adhere to him.

In the *body:* we should devote to the service of Christ all its senses and members, our eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof; but present your members as instruments of justice unto God." Rom. vi, 12, 13.

b. For what reason are we to bear Jesus?

Because Jesus has borne for us his wounds, the crown of

thorns, the cross, our sins on the cross. "Surely he has borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows * * * He was wounded for our iniquities." Isai. liii, 4. "The soldiers, plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head. So Jesus came forth bearing the crown of thorns." John xix, 2, 5. "And bearing his cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary." John xix, 17. "Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree." I Pet. ii, 24.

Because Jesus bears us sinful creatures from our childhood to our grave. "Hearken unto me, who are carried by my bowels (mercy); and to your grey hairs I will carry you." Isai. xlvi, 3, 4.

Because Jesus will bear us also into eternal rest and heavenly joys. Lazarus was carried into Abraham's bosom. Lk. xvi, 22. "You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you." Isai. lxvi, 12.

3. *They carried him to Jerusalem.*

This intimates:

a. We should not return when we are half way on the road as those who observe strictly the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church during Lent, but after Easter-Communion commence their own sinful life anew.

b. We should rather continually advance in good works and virtue, until we reach Jerusalem, the "*city of peace.*" This peace will be imparted to us in celestial Jerusalem, if we persevere. "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." Mt. x, 22. Cf. Apoc. xi, 10.

4. "*To present him to the Lord.*"

We can do nothing better than continually present Jesus to His Heavenly Father, and offer him up for our salvation; since we cannot be acceptable to the Father but through him. We should do so

a. In our prayers, imploring help through the merits of

Jesus Christ, according to the example of the Holy Church, who concludes all her prayers: "Through our Lord Jesus Christ."

b. By the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "We have an altar * * * By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Heb. xiii, 10, 15. What better could we offer than the consubstantial Son, in whom the Father is well pleased?

6. "*And to offer a sacrifice, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.*"

Mary offered the sacrifice of the poor, because she was not rich in temporal, but in heavenly goods. We also ought to strive to become rich in heavenly things. Let the sacrifice of Mary be an exhortation to us in this regard.

II.

CANDLEMASS.

Simeon praised the divine Child as "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles;" and the Holy Church joins this praise by blessing the candles which she and her children are to use in the service of God. We distinguish the following candles:

1. *The baptismal candle.*

It reminds us of the splendor of innocence and of the glory of heaven. With regard to the baptismal font we may employ the words: "With thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light." Ps. xxxv, 10.

a. Let us, therefore, preserve our innocence. "Receive the burning lamp, and, by being irreprehensible, guard thy baptism." Rit. Rom.

b. Then we shall behold the light of glory. "Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence; and hast established me in thy sight for ever." Ps. xl, 13.

2. *The candles used at divine service.*

They symbolize Jesus, who calls himself "the light of the world."

a. They symbolize Jesus himself, the candlestick bearing the candle representing his holy human nature; the pure wax, his ineffably perfect soul; the light, his glorious divine nature.

b. They symbolize also the enlightening of men by Jesus Christ. How dense was the spiritual darkness before the advent of Christ! Jesus came as the true light, "which enlighteneth every man." Would that we might never be of the number of whom it is written: "The darkness did not comprehend it."

The light of his doctrine shines in darkness. "The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." Isai. ix, 2.

The light of his example. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness." John viii, 12.

The light of his grace. Hence the warning: "Watch whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtakes you not." John xii, 35.

The light of his glory. Of celestial Jerusalem it is written: "The city needeth not sun nor moon to shine in it: for the glory of God hath enlightened it; and the Lamb is the light thereof." Apoc. xxi, 23.

3. *The candle of the dying.*

a. Its significance. Only in the light of innocence, faith, grace and virtue, can man ever enter the light of glory, unless he does penance for his sins.

b. Its exhortation. All earthly possessions and pleasures appear in its light in their real value.

4. *The candles at the bier, or tumba.*

The eternal light will shine upon the departed, if the significance of these candles has been fulfilled in them.

a. The light at the feet of the deceased signifies Christian wisdom, which should guide all our steps. The beginning of this wisdom is the fear of the Lord,—its perfection is the perfect love of God.

b. The light at the head signifies the charitable works which, according to the promise of the Lord, confer a strong claim to the possession of eternal beatitude.

c. The light on the left side signifies the avoidance of sins. "If thou will enter life, keep the commandments."

d. The light on the right side signifies the obtaining of those virtues, by reason of which we are ever prepared to meet the Bridegroom with our lamp trimmed.

May the light of doctrine, of grace, and of all virtue, ever shine in our souls, that the eternal Light may one day shine unto us also.

B. Albert the Great.

Septuagesima Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

The design of this parable is to teach us, that the heavenly reward which we expect, is not measured by the time of our labors, but rather by the cheerfulness and zeal with which we labor. It furnishes us, therefore, with great consolation, when we remember the sloth and unproductiveness of our past years; and on the other hand, since we do not know how near the eleventh hour is to every one of us, it is calculated to make us more circumspect for the future. The parable resolves itself into two divisions: (1) The householder hires laborers for his vineyard. (2) He pays them their hire.

I.

THE HOUSEHOLDER HIRES LABORERS FOR HIS VINEYARD.

1. The householder is God. The vineyard the Church, in whose pale men serve God and labor for heaven, in distinction from the market-place, where men, idle as they are in the affairs which concern their everlasting life, are wholly absorbed in

earthly cares. By the day in the morning of which the householder went to hire laborers, we understand the lifetime granted to man, after which "the night cometh when no man can work." John ix, 4.

2. Our Redeemer supposes in the parable, that men *merit* eternal life; for he speaks of an agreement to labor for a certain "*hire*," and of paying "what is just." A merit, founded on God's gracious promises, since the householder was not obliged to hire laborers. The hire agreed upon is life eternal, denoted by the "*denarius*," the then usual wages for a day's work.

3. The Jews, having become subject to Rome, adopted the Roman custom of calculating time, dividing their days and nights into twelve hours, so that day commenced at six o'clock in the morning, and night at six o'clock in the evening. The twelve hours of the night they divided into four watches, of three hours each, at the close of which the military guard relieved one another. They divided the twelve hours of the day into four parts also:—*Prime*, *Terce*, *Sext* and *None*. It is at these different principal points of time that the householder went forth to hire laborers for his vineyard. He went forth early in the morning, about the third hour (nine o'clock), then about the sixth, and ninth hours, (at noon, and three o'clock in the afternoon); at last, about the eleventh hour (five o'clock), one hour before sunset.

Some men are called and receive holy baptism "early in the morning." Others are called from boyhood, others, in manhood; and others, in old age. But alas! there are so many who, loitering in the market-place, find no time to listen to the call of the Lord, and to go into his vineyard. They ought to know that neither lukewarmness nor indifferentism will lead them to heaven.

How miserable is the condition of idlers! Some are too lazy to provide for themselves the necessaries of life. Some are very busy in the market-place of the world; but because they neglect to provide for their immortal souls, they are also idlers before God. They are (*a*) those who neglect to do good works,

and to use the means of grace; (*b*) those who in a careless manner perform the works demanded by God; (*c*) those who perform good works with a sinister intention. Do you, perhaps, belong to one of these classes? You are not sure that God will call you again. "Because I called, and you refused, I also will laugh in your destruction." Prov. i, 24, 26. The delay of penance is full of danger.

II.

THE HOUSEHOLDER PAYS THE LABORERS THEIR HIRE.

1. "And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire," etc.

a. *Evening* means the close of human life, the day of the *particular judgment*. To him who has worked faithfully in the Lord's vineyard, death is the beginning of his eternal reward and rest. To the idler that evening is the beginning of the night, "when no man can work."

b. The *steward* is Jesus Christ, whom "the Father has given authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man." John v, 27.

2. "When, therefore, they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny," etc.

a. According to the scope of the parable, we learn from these words, that God had an undisputed right to give a day's wages to every one who shall have worked in his vineyard, when evening came. These wages are the possession of everlasting life. This does not exclude the doctrine often inculcated by Holy Scripture, and insinuated even at the end of this parable, that there are different degrees of beatitude.

b. The above doctrine contains a great consolation. For all advantages of birth or rank, etc., have no value with God, who is no respecter of persons: all have access to the treasures of grace and to the joys of heaven. When Peter, in his name and in the name of the other Apostles, asked the Lord what would be their reward, He answered: "*Everyone* that has left

house or brethren, etc., for my name's sake shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting." Mt. xix, 29. Furthermore, those who enter the Lord's service at a very late hour will receive life everlasting, although no one who once slighted the divine call has a claim to another call.

c. The words of the householder contain also a two-fold warning: first, to persevere until evening, for before evening the wages are not paid; and only those receive wages who are found still laboring in the vineyard at the twelfth hour. What a folly to leave the vineyard, after you have "borne the burden of the day and the heats!" Cf. Ezech. xviii, 24. The other warning is, that we should never murmur against the dispositions of Divine Providence and against the Divine Judgments. We are short-sighted, God knows the present and the things to come. He knew that Dismas merited more in a few hours on the cross than many others in a lifetime. He made Paul, the last of the Apostles, equal to the others, and Paul "labored more abundantly than they all." I Cor. xv, 10. Perhaps it is yet time to make up what you have lost through negligence in your past years, in order that your reward may equal that of a Saint.

3. "But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong," etc. Although these and the following words are inserted in the parable for ornament's sake, because at the Day of judgment none of the Saints will murmur against the Lord; yet they contain a practical doctrine, because before the Day of reckoning there are laborers found in God's vineyard, who have more regard for the reward of the Lord than for the Lord of the reward. They are those narrow-hearted souls, who fear to do more for God than they deem themselves bound; who only regard the letter of the law.

To them are opposed those humble souls who through charity give themselves entirely to God, entrusting themselves to His magnanimity—prefigured by the last laborers who went into the vineyard, without making an agreement for wages. These are the true children of God, who never murmur against God and his all-wise dispositions, who never boast of their merits, being aware of their being unprofitable servants.

4. "So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." Our Lord draws the conclusion: "Thus you see, how the last shall be first, and the first last." Those who, in point of time, come first, shall be last in the extent of the reward, i. e., they shall receive the same reward as those who came last; and those who, in point of time, came last, shall receive the same reward as those who came first, thus being the first as regards the reward, so that all receive the same reward. It is true, there are some who are exalted above the many who are *called;* but these *chosen* ones are few; they have a special preference, not in consequence of divine justice which pays to every one his hire, but merely in consequence of divine mercy and predilection. In these words our Saviour alludes to his Apostles whom he had *chosen*, and who had asked him what would be their reward. (Mt. xix, 27.) He alludes also to all those who not merely observe God's commandments, but practice the Evangelical counsels.

Let us then "work our salvation with fear and trembling," seriously reflecting on the words, *Ever* and *Never*. The reward as well as the punishment in the other world is ever to continue, never to end.

VIII.

(*St. Agatha, Virgin, Martyr.*)

DIGNITY AND QUALITIES OF THE VIRGINAL STATE.

St. Agatha gained on earth a double crown, that of martyrdom, and that of virginity; the first as a reward for the love of the latter. I think, therefore, that we cannot honor St. Agatha in a better manner, than by explaining the dignity, and qualities of the virginal state.

I.

THE DIGNITY OF THE VIRGINAL STATE.

The dignity of this state is evident:

1. *From its origin.*

It is from heaven where angels dwell, that the lily of incontaminated purity has been transplanted into our souls, by Jesus

Christ. The Son of God himself became the model and teacher of the virginal state. He decreed to be born of the Blessed among women, who remained the Immaculate Virgin before, at, and after the birth of her Son. A virginal angel in the flesh was his Precursor; and of the Apostles, the virginal John was the one for whom he bore the tenderest love. From that time we behold thousands and thousands of either sex embracing the virginal state.

2. *From its design.*

a. The object to be attained by the virginal state, decreed by Jesus Christ, and expounded by the Apostle, (I Cor. vii. 25) is the striving toward perfection in the kingdom of God, the desire for the sanctification of the entire inward and outward man; the longing of the heart to belong to Jesus Christ alone in undivided love.

b. This design is so sublime, celestial, and superhuman, that Jesus Christ would not make virginity a precept, but an evangelical counsel for those on whom he confers this peculiar heavenly gift.

3. *From its fruits.*

a. The true Christian virgin enjoys an inner peace which is a foretaste of heaven; that peace which Christ gives, and the world cannot give, and known to pious married people only partly, because they belong partly to the world. I Cor. vii.

b. She is sometimes deigned worthy of a love and devotion so tender and celestial, as to appear like an angel in human shape. How wondrous things do we read, for instance, in the lives of St. Agatha, Agnes, Catharine, Magdalene of Pazzis, Teresa, etc.?

c. In heaven she enjoys a special privilege. "They sung as it were a new Canticle, before the throne * * * And no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Apoc. xiv, 3, 4.

II.

NECESSARY QUALITIES OF THE VIRGINAL STATE.

The virginal state, in order to be acceptable to God and meritorious for heaven, ought to be not only free from vices, but also adorned with all Christian virtues; especially

1. *With the love of God.*

For the love of God is the perfection and queen of all Christian virtues.

Endowed with this love

a. The Christian virgin has the eyes of her soul continually directed toward the object of her affections, with a filial fear to fulfill in all things the will of her Beloved.

b. She is humble. Diffident of her own strength, she trusts only in the grace of the Lord, and commits herself entirely to the guidance of his Spirit, who manifests his will, not only by inner inspirations, but especially through the mouth of his minister.

c. She is modest and discreet in her conversation, vigilant in regard to her senses, particularly her eyes and ears, and keeps far from the noisy, foolish amusements of the children of the world. "If I did yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Gal. i, 10.

d. She is led by the Holy Ghost to be constant in prayer, not only in church, but also at home.

e. She desires to be made conformable to her divine Spouse in the love of poverty, of the cross, and of contempt, in the endurance of bodily pain, in fasting, works of penance, and self-denial. "God forbid that I should glory, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Gal vi, 14.

2. *With charity for our fellow-men.*

"This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother." I John iv, 24. In this charity

a. The true Christian virgin performs the Corporal as well as the Spiritual works of Mercy; she advises and helps

efficaciously wherever she can, mindful of the word of the Lord: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me." Mt. xxv, 40.

b. She is busy in propagating the kingdom of Jesus Christ among men, remembering the word of her Saviour: "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." Lk. xi, 23. Accordingly, she endeavors, in her small circle, by a good example and kind admonitions, to prevent evil, to promote virtue, and to inspire youth with love of prayer, and with fear of the Lord.

J. B. Weigl.

Sexagesima Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

How consoling it is to see the faithful throng in crowds to the house of God; but how sad to see the places of amusement filled with visitors, whilst the word of God is neglected! The Evangelist says expressly, that "a very great multitude was gathered together" and hastened out of the cities,—a reproach for so many modern cities, the inhabitants of which constitute themselves their own apostles and saviours. "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Apoc. iii, 17.—Jesus calls, at the beginning of the sermon, the attention of his hearers to the conditions under which the word of God will bear fruit in their hearts, explaining to them what is bad ground, and what is good ground for the word of God; or, in other words, (1) who they are who do not profit by the word of God, (2) who they are who profit by it.

I.

WHO ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT PROFIT BY THE WORD OF GOD?

I am not to speak of those who do not hear the word of God at all; of them the Saviour said: "He that is of God, heareth

the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God." John viii, 47. I am to speak of those who hear the word of God, but without profit. Jesus mentions three classes of such men :

1. "Some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it."—"They by the wayside are they that hear : the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved." There are men in whom the word of God cannot produce any effect, because either their condition of soul renders them unsusceptible of it, or hinders its taking root. Thereby a two-fold defect is insinuated : (1) feebleness of intellect, and (2) perversity of heart.

Jesus himself says Mt. xiii, 19, that when any one heareth the word of God, and understandeth it not, the wicked one cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. Indeed there are not a few who have learned so little about their holy religion, and have taken so little pains to increase in religious knowledge, that they do not understand the plainest sermon. How great is the responsibility incurred by parents who neglect the Christian education of their children ! How great is the responsibility of those who neglect to increase in religious knowledge, but especially of those who are well versed in secular science ! The *evil will*, however, is the great enemy of the productiveness of the word of God. Men hear the word of God from mere custom, but their mind is, the while, a harbor of proud, impure, envious thoughts. The word of God is "trodden down" as something that has no value. The seed does not enter the ground.

And even the seed which is of necessity sterile, because it fell on the roadside, is taken away by the fowls of the air, that is, as Jesus says himself, by the devil. The wicked one prevents men from earnestly reflecting on their eternal destiny and on celestial things, and keeps their mind concentrated on temporal affairs.

Therefore, let us prepare our hearts, that they may be a good ground for the word of God. It is not without significance, that

the minister and his hearers make the sign of the Cross at the beginning of the sermon; and the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* concerns the laity no less than the preacher.

2. The second class of men our Saviour compares to a rock, on which the seed springs up very soon, but just as soon withers away, because it has no moisture. This class embraces those light natures, who are easily softened and excited by the word of God; but their will not being firm and constant, they fall away *in time of temptation*, when a sacrifice for the sake of religion is demanded, when they are required to renounce sensual pleasures, worldly honors, temporal gains, or to suffer a temporal loss, and contempt by the world.

The number of these men is exceedingly great. For however deformed the divine image in our soul may be, the vestiges of its primitive beauty remained, so that there are few sinners who would not, from time to time, long for reconciliation with Him whose image they bear in their souls.

This class of men are in a very dangerous condition: (*a*) because confounding the "*good heart*" with a good will, and natural softness with virtue, they do not reflect on serious conversion; (*b*) because they grow indifferent to the inspirations of divine grace; (*c*) because a special curse rests on the repeated contempt of grace. A dreadful example of their inconstancy and final reprobation is Pharao.

3. The third class of men our Saviour compares to a soil, good and fertile in itself, but covered with thorns, that choke the seed when it has sprung up, so that it cannot yield fruit. The thorns are the cares, and riches, and pleasures, of this life. By the land that received the seed among thorns are represented those who, unlike the first class of hearers, understood it; and, like the second class of hearers, gladly embraced the word, and were delighted with it. But in this third class of hearers, the fruit of the word was destroyed, and prevented from reaching maturity, by the cares, riches and pleasures of this life. They are those whose heart is divided between God and the world. And what are the obstacles in their way to true virtue?

a. The cares of the world, that is, excessive anxiety, arising from undue attention to the things of this earth. The one necessary thing is, to serve and love God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole strength." All other exertions ought to be subordinate, and auxiliary, to this one necessary effort toward loving God. "No man can serve two masters." Mt. vi, 24. They invert the demand of the Lord Mt. vi, 33 in this manner: "Seek ye first all these things, and the kingdom of heaven shall be added unto you."

b. Its riches. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." He who keeps his heart divided, commits robbery. "You cannot serve God and mammon." Mt. vi, 24. Riches are no absolute obstacle in the way of salvation. We know of holy kings. But men are very prone to attach to them their hearts, and to regard them practically as their supreme goods, from which idolatry proceeds with many other vices, as avarice, pride, injustice, etc, "No covetous person, which is a serving of idols, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God, and of Christ." Eph. v, 5.

c. The pleasures of life. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." This command requires of us that we detach our inclinations from sensuality, and seek our joy in holy union with God. The drunkard, the gambler, the unchaste, the idler, make slight efforts toward conversion; but they are soon engulfed again in the pleasures of life. Even Herod was on the way to become converted. "Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man; and kept him; and having heard him, did many things: and he heard him willingly." Mk. vi, 20. But lust, and luxury, made him a murderer of the Prophet, and left him no time to seek Jesus and to hear his doctrine, although "he was desirous of a long time to see him" (Lk. xxiii, 8), and caused him at last to mock at Jesus.

These obstacles are called *thorns*, because the riches and pleasures of life cause great anxiety when we seek them, great

fear when we possess them, and cruel torments when we lose them.

II.

WHO ARE THOSE THAT PROFIT BY THE WORD OF GOD?

"And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold. That on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

1. Above all, we must *hear* the word of God, and not read it only. This is frequently enjoined in Holy Scripture. Jesus calls blessed those who *hear* the word of God and keep it. We are commanded by the voice of the Father on Tabor to *hear* his Son. And as the Father commands us to hear his Son, so the Son commands us to *hear* his Apostles and his Church. Faith comes, according to Holy Scripture, from hearing. And indeed, it is not the dead word of the Bible, but the living word of the authorized heralds of the Gospel that has converted the world. It is true, some of the Apostles have been teaching by the written word also; but it has only been supplementary to the word of the mouth. By this doctrine alone not only the authority of the Church, but also of the Bible is maintained, whilst experience teaches, that by the opposite doctrine the authority of the Bible is destroyed also.

2. *Who are those that in a good and perfect heart hear the word of God?*

The good heart is compared to good ground, on which the seed is sown; and the ground is good for receiving the seed, when it is cleansed and well prepared. Therefore those in whom the seed falls on good ground are they who are either innocent, or sorry for their sins; wherefore it is advisable to make an act of contrition before the beginning of the sermon. "The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God." I Cor. ii, 11. "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." Wisd. i, 4.

Beside purity of heart, a good intention is required—the intention to promote God's honor, and to increase in virtue.

3. *It is also necessary to keep the word of God.*

We should often reflect on it, as the Blessed Virgin did who "kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." Lk. ii, 19. We should be not only hearers, but also doers of the word.

4. *They bring forth fruit in patience.*

They carry patiently into execution, whatever they have learned from the word of God. For, as St. Paul says, "patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36. As the ground is stirred up in many ways, before it can bring forth fruit; so we should also endure many hardships. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. As the tiller of the soil has to wait in patience for the fruit of his labor, so we should also patiently grow in virtue.

VIII.

(*St. Matthias, Apostle.*)

THE FALL OF JUDAS, AND THE ELECTION OF MATTHIAS.

Matthias received the ministry which had been possessed by Judas. We are thus reminded on this day of the fall of Judas, and the election of Matthias: an instructive theme of meditation.

I.

THE FALL OF JUDAS.

What Holy Scripture has recorded about the fall of Judas is well calculated to inspire us with wholesome fear.

I. The crime of Judas reminds us of the great danger we all are in of falling into sin.

The danger is illustrated

1. *By examples.*

a. *Lucifer* was one of the most exalted angels. Endowed with sanctifying grace, only holy angels were his associates. Notwithstanding he fell into a great sin and, by his bad example, seduced many others.

b. *Adam and Eve* lived in Paradise, and sanctifying grace had clothed their souls with angelic innocence. Both sinned in Paradise, and their sin and its consequences fell upon the whole human race.

c. *Judas* may, at the beginning of his apostleship, have been a better man than any one of us. But even the apostleship did not preserve him from the most grievous crime. He became "the leader of the men who apprehended Jesus." Act. i, 16. He betrayed with a kiss his best friend, and delivered him into the hands of his deadly enemies. "The devil put into the heart of Judas to betray him." John xiii, 2.

2. *By the unequivocal statements of Scripture.*

"Let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall." I Cor. x, 12. "Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation." Mk. xiv, 38. "Work your salvation with fear and trembling." Philp. ii, 12.

Oh! how urgent reason have we to pray daily with fervor: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

II. Judas did not become converted.

This should make every sinner fear, as it is a proof that no sinner is secured against eternal damnation.

1. True, Judas acknowledged his sin. "Judas repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief-priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." Mt. xxvii, 3.

2. Judas could, like Peter, have obtained forgiveness. For Jesus was at the very moment of betrayal kind to him, calling him

friend, and saying: "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" Lk. xxii, 48.

3. But Judas resisted the grace, "and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst; and all his bowels gushed out." Act. i, 18. "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born." Mt. xxvi, 14.

And alas! there are still many who, like Judas, betray the Lord, and, instead of doing sincere penance, plunge themselves deeper and deeper into sin. True, our God is bountiful and merciful. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." Ezech. xxxiii, 11. But if the sinner is not willing to be converted, he himself is, like Judas, the cause of his own ruin.

II.

THE ELECTION OF ST. MATTHIAS.

It was a great honor to St. Matthias to be chosen to the apostleship in place of Judas:—chosen

I. *By men.*

St. Peter, rising up in the midst of the brethren, proposed to elect another Apostle in the place of Judas. "Let another take his bishopric. Wherefore, of these men who have been with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection." Act. i, 20. "And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." Act. i, 23.

1. We learn from this that Matthias was possessed of the qualities which the Vicar of Christ demanded in a member of the Apostolic College. He hath been a faithful disciple and follower of Jesus Christ, an eye-witness of his miracles, of his Passion and Death, of his resurrection and ascension. Moreover, he must have been a very pious and zealous man, since so many deemed him worthy of the dignity of an Apostle.

2. We admire the modesty and humility of the disciples of Jesus. No one intruded himself to this high dignity, but all left it to God's all-wise disposition.

II. *By God himself.*

The Holy Ghost had foretold through David with regard to Judas: "May his days be few; and his bishopric let another take." Ps. cviii, 8. Peter reminded his brethren of this prophecy, before the election of the Apostle took place. We know therefore, that St. Matthias was chosen by God himself in the place of Judas. This was the reason why the Apostles prayed to the Lord: "Thou O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen, to take the place of this ministry, and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place." "And they gave them lots; and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Act. i, 24-26.

Let us congratulate the holy Apostle on this day on his having been received in the number of those who were made the foundation stones of the Christian Church.

Koenigsdorfer.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

The prophecy of the Saviour concerning his Passion and Death, and the healing of the blind man, are appropriately selected to be read at the beginning of Lent. The Holy Church intends herein to remind us of the principal object for which Lent has been instituted, namely, that it should be a season especially set apart for meditation on his Sacred Passion.—In the blind man who sat by the wayside the Holy Fathers see the whole human race before the coming of Christ represented, because it was spiritually blind. Jesus, by his holy Cross, has opened our spiritual eyes, imparting to us true knowledge and wisdom. Permit me now to call your attention to these two parts of the Gospel: the prophecy of the Sacred Passion, and the healing of the blind man.

I.

JESUS FORETELLS HIS PASSION AND DEATH.

1. "At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man."

a. This journey of the Lord was the last he made to the ungrateful city. We are informed by St. John (xi, 54) that, after having raised Lazarus from the dead, our Redeemer, in order to avoid the fury of the Pharisees, retired to the city Ephraim, near the desert, whence he went up to Jerusalem, as is recorded here, in order to celebrate the Pasch, by shedding his blood as the true Paschal Lamb. He would die, not in a remote place of Galilee, but in Jerusalem, the capital and centre of the Jewish nation, on the mount of Moria, where Isaac, who prefigured him, was once immolated, in the proximity of the temple, where the bloody sacrifices were slaughtered, and where the

prophets were killed.—This prophecy was to the disciples, and is still to us, a motive for believing in Jesus, and for loving him. The disciples became convinced in consequence of this prophecy, when a few days later they saw it fulfilled, that their Master died freely and voluntarily. This prophecy is also a motive for love, because we see his resolution to embrace the bitterest death for love of us who were lost. "He was offered because it was his own will."

b. We go with Jesus up to Jerusalem also. Jesus is our leader, whom, although he lead us to the cross and to tribulations, we are bound to follow, "looking on Jesus, who having joy proposed unto him, underwent the cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii, 2. "Whoever doeth not carry his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Lk. xiv, 27. Our life is thus a journey with Jesus.

Up to Jerusalem, the celestial city. (Apoc. xxi, 2.) Oh! that we might ever remember, especially in time of despondency and temptation, our home above the clouds! Would that we might never have our hearts attached to the foreign country, the land of Babylon, where we spend the days of our pilgrimage! "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee; if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy." Ps. cxxxvi, 5.

2. "For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again."

a. Judas delivered Jesus to the Jews; the Jews delivered him to the Gentiles—to Pilate, who in his turn delivered him to the soldiery. Pilate said: "Thy own nation, and the chief-priests have delivered thee up to me." John xviii, 35. Mocking, scourging, and crucifixion being the principal parts of our Redeemer's Passsion, they are mentioned by Jesus.

b. Jesus foreknew his sufferings all his lifetime. He knew the instruments of his Passion, so that we may safely say, that his Passion and Death lasted all his lifetime, inasmuch, as the

sure knowledge of a future torment is almost equal to the torment itself. Who is able to comprehend the intensity of divine love, the heinousness of sin, and the severity of divine justice?

c. Jesus does not conceal anything concerning his sufferings before his disciples; but, to furnish grounds for consolation in the midst of the sorrows caused by them, he speaks of the resurrection also: "The third day he shall rise again."—The resurrection from the dead is our consolation also, in the many afflictions and tribulations of body and soul.

3. "And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said."

a. They did not understand how He, whom they believed and professed to be the Son of God, immortal and impassible, could be subjected to death; or how such a thing could be reconciled with His glorious reign, which they expected. Therefore, they may have thought that Jesus spoke perhaps in a figurative language, the meaning of which was not obvious.

b. We meet now-a-day's a remarkable ignorance in religious matter. A close observer will discover various causes by which this ignorance may be explained; as for instance: (1) *Arrogance*, manifested by the desire to know every thing better than others. Heretics trust more in their own intelligence, than in the science of many centuries. (2) *Prejudice.* Every one knows how difficult it is to become convinced of an error nourished from childhood. (3) *Sensuality.* St. Paul speaks of enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose God is their belly. Philip. iii, 18. (4) *Vicious life* in general. "Their own malice blinded them." Wisd. ii, 21. St. Paul speaks of men who detained the truth of God in injustice, and who, in punishment, became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. Rom. i, 18, 21.

II.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN.

The other object of Lent is to induce us to do penance, the necessity of which is intimated by the blind man sitting by the wayside, begging,—a figure of the sinner.

1. "Now it came to pass that when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging."

a. Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, as St. Mark calls him, was blind and poor, sitting by the wayside and asking alms of those who passed by.

b. The sinner is also blind, because he is deprived of celestial light, and does not see for what end he has been created. The approach of death, the irreversible judgment, the torments of hell, the joys of heaven, are to him as if they were not. The Sacred Passion of Christ, the examples of the Saints, make no more impression upon his mind, than the colors upon the eyes of the blind. And yet he is not conscious of his being blind. "If you were blind, you should not have sin; but now you say: We see. Your sin remaineth." John ix, 41.

c. The sinner is also exceedingly poor. As the blind can do no work, nor earn wages; so sinners can perform no meritorious works, nor gain any merits. The sinner sits by the wayside, forsaken by God and his holy angel, *begging*—begging from the devil "the husks the swine do eat." What does it profit you to gain the whole world, if you lose your own soul?

2. "And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me."

a. He uttered this prayer from the depth of his heart, and proclaimed aloud, that he regarded Jesus as the promised Messias, who was to be the Son of David; and also the Son of God, wherefore he cried out: "Have mercy on me."

b. Every sinner ought to implore Jesus for help, especially in this blessed time of Lent, when "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by," inviting sinners to penance, and to the remembrance of his suffering for them; and when the multitude of Christians are anxious to go to church, to attend the unbloody renewal of the bloody Sacrifice on Golgotha, and to receive the holy sacraments of Confession and Communion. Oh! do not mind the mockeries of sinners, but cry out the more fervently: "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!"

3. "And Jesus, standing, commanded him to be brought

unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord that I may see."

a. Jesus the omniscient God asks the blind man: "What wilt thou?" For it is expedient for man to utter his wants, for the sake of humility. (The parable of the judge and the widow.)

b. If we desire to have our petitions granted, we must also approach Jesus, by detaching ourselves from sin. "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear; thou shalt cry, and he shall say: Here I am. If thou wilt take away the chain out of the midst of thee," etc. Isai. lviii, 9.

c. It is especially in the holy Eucharist that the sinner ought to seek the grace of conversion. In this most blessed Sacrament Jesus remains, that we may come to him and experience his succour. Jesus says to the soul: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come." Cant. ii, 10.

4. "And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole," etc.

a. How kind is Jesus to all those who put their entire confidence in him! Oh! sinners, whoever you are, despair not. If you wish to be released from your sins, go to Jesus, who gave sight to the blind man.

b. Who is able to represent to his mind the great joy of the blind man, when, for the first time, his eyes opened upon God's beautiful world! This scene is an imperfect figure of the happy entrance of a glorified soul into the eternal light of heaven, for the description of which St. Paul, who was enraptured into the third heaven, could find no adequate words. I Cor. ii, 9. Cf. II Cor. xii, 2. In this happy abode the eyes of our soul will be enlightened to behold the Triune God, and the jubilant choirs of the Angels and Saints, who, when they will see us enter heaven, will give praise to God.

In order to be worthy of such a reception, let us follow Jesus, after we have abandoned our sins, as Bartimeus followed Jesus, glorifying God.

VIII.

ON THE CEREMONY OF DISTRIBUTING ASHES.

The time of Lent is a time of penance. Penance is the only means of salvation left. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 3. Our Holy Mother, the Church, exhorts us again and again during this sacred season to become converted to the Lord our God. For the same purpose, she performs on Ash-Wednesday the ceremony of distributing ashes; it being (1) *a symbol of penance, and* (2) *an exhortation to penance.*

I.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES A SYMBOL OF PENANCE.

Ashes have ever been regarded as a symbol of penance, both in the Old and New Covenant.

1. When Jonas threatened the Ninivites with divine punishment, "they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the last." Jonas iii, 5.

David says of himself: "I did eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." Ps. ci, 10. This holy penitent had his daily food mixed with ashes.

Thamar, the daughter of David, after having been ravished, "put ashes on her head, and went on crying." II Kings xiii, 19. We read also of Job (xlii, 6), of the widow Judith (ix, 1), of Mardochai (Esther iv, 9) and many others, that they manifested their penance by putting ashes on their heads.

The prophet *Jeremias* exhorted the Jews to use the same manifestation of a penitent spirit. "Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and sprinkle yourselves with ashes, ye leaders of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and dispersion are accomplished, you shall fall like precious vessels."

2. In the New Covenant, our Saviour himself speaks of this symbol of penance, saying: "Wo to thee Corozain, wo to thee Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon the mighty works had been done that have been done in you, they would long ago have done penance in sackcloth and ashes." Mt. xi, 21. In the early ages of the Church the bishop, on Ash-Wednesday, used to sprinkle

the penitents with ashes, saying with his clergy the seven Penitential Psalms, and the litany of the Saints. Thereupon he led them out of the church, reminding them of Adam having been cast out of Paradise. Then, standing at the entrance of the church, he exhorted them not to despair of divine mercy, but, by fasting, prayer, alms-giving, and other good works, to render themselves worthy of being received again into church on Holy Thursday.

The public penance was abolished in the course of time, but the ceremony of imposing ashes upon the heads of the faithful was kept up; the council of Benevent A. D. 1091 enjoined the imposition of the blessed ashes upon the heads of all the faithful without exception, that all might be reminded of the necessity of doing penance.

Let us then all, if time allows it, be present at the divine service, on Wednesday next. We have the more urgent reason to come, since this ceremony is not only a symbol of, but an exhortation to, penance.

II.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES AN EXHORTATION TO PENANCE.

We are easily convinced thereof, by reflecting on the origin of the blessed ashes, on the manner in which they are imposed, and on the words used at their distribution.

1. The ashes used on Ash-Wednesday are the ashes of the burnt palm branches that were blessed on Palm Sunday of the previous year. Since palm branches are regarded as a symbol of peace, their ashes remind us of the peace with God and with ourselves being lost to us, and, as it were, burnt to ashes, in consequence of our many sins. They recall to our memory the sad fact that heaven is lost to us, and that no hope is left us to recover it by our natural faculties.—But by the grace of Jesus it is made possible for us to find rest again for our souls, and to recover heaven, if by penance we renew our participation of the merits gained for us on Golgotha.

2. Ashes are the remains of substances destroyed by fire. Of the most generous metal and of the most precious stones, when burnt, nothing remains but ashes; which, on this account,

are regarded as a symbol of the vanity of all earthly things. Whatever the earth can offer you, is nothing more than ashes, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity," exclaimed Solomon, the most favored of kings. To a great many Christians the charm of temporal joys is what the bait is to the fish, viz., the cause of death.

It is this important truth that the Church inculcates on our mind on Ash-Wednesday. "All visible things," she says, "are as if they were ashes." Therefore do not allow your hearts to become attached to them, but take care of your immortal soul.

3. The ashes are put on our *head*, to intimate that, as long as the spirit of pride has possession of our souls, we have no hope for the remission of our sins; for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6. Fasts, prayers, and alms, are of no avail, if humility is wanting. The humble Publican was justified, but the proud Pharisee was not.

The Church, by putting ashes upon our heads, says that we have no reason to be proud, since we are nothing more than dust and ashes, and vile creatures, both in regard to our origin and our end.

4. In distributing the ashes the priest pronounces the words: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and art to return into dust." Poor sinner, you will die. Do you know at what hour you will die? If you should die in your sins, what then? If you die without the assistance of a priest, without sacraments, even without pronouncing the name of Jesus, what then? If you would remember death, you could not but prepare yourself for it. "In all thy works remember thy last end; and thou shalt never sin." Ecclus. vii, 40.

Such is the significance of the distribution of ashes on Ash-Wednesday. Would to God it may induce us to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, during the forty days of Lent. Then the word of the Prophet will be verified in us: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live and shall not die." Ezech. xviii, 21.

J. E. Zollner.

First Sunday of Lent.

VII.
HOMILY.

The Holy Church represents to us, at the beginning of Lent, Jesus in his fasting as him who took upon himself our sins in order to atone for them, and in his victory over the devil as the Just One. The Second Adam makes atonement in the desert by fasting for the guilt the first Adam had incurred in Paradise by sensuality. The Just One goes forth to combat the treble temptation: the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life, to which our first parents had ignominiously succumbed.—The Holy Church, by reminding us of this event at the beginning of Lent, exhorts us by the example of our Saviour to fast during this sacred time, and learn to overcome the temptations of Satan.

I.

JESUS FASTED FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS.

1. Immediately after his baptism, "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil." The Spirit, by whom Jesus was led into the desert, is not an unholy, wicked spirit, but the Holy Ghost, to whose impulses our Redeemer yielded, and by whom he was guided from his infancy; thus, by his example, exhorting us who "have received the spirit of adoption of sons," to yield to the guidance of the same Holy Spirit. For "whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii, 14.

The Holy Ghost led Jesus *into the desert.* The desert was an impressive symbol of the place of our exile, far from Paradise which Jesus was to recover for us, proceeding, as it were, from the place of our exile toward the lost Paradise, in order to restore it to us.

The desolateness of the desert, where "he was with the beasts" (Mk. i, 13), having no human habitation, is indeed a fit

symbol of our earthly abode.—The wild beasts recognized Jesus as their Creator and Lord, putting to shame so many Christians who revolt against Him. Oh! let us reflect, especially during these forty days, on our relation to God, on the relation of servants to their master, by nature, and of sons to their Father, by grace.—The Holy Spirit invites us also to withdraw into the desert during Lent: "Behold, I allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart." Osee ii, 14. He invites us to seek and love, more than at other times, the solitude of the house of God, and to keep far from the market-place of the world.

2. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry." As to this forty days' fast we have to observe:

a. The Evangelist mentions the *nights*, in order to distinguish this fast from the Jewish fasts which were confined to the day only. At nights the Jews would use food.—The number, *forty*, is remarkable in Holy Scripture, because events of the utmost importance to man were accomplished within this space of time, from the forty days of the deluge to the forty days of our Lord's staying on earth after his Resurrection. As Moses before giving the Old Law, and Elias before reforming the morals of the people, fasted forty days, so our Redeemer, before giving the New Law, retired into the deep solitude of the desert for forty days, to fast and pray in preparation for his divine mission.

b. Let us, therefore, consider this time of Lent as sacred, because it is sanctified by the example of our Lord. The fast to be observed during these forty days is of Apostolical origin. As Christians we are bound to fulfill the duty of following the example of Jesus Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." Lk. ix, 23. Behold our King inaugurating his kingdom by a forty days' fast, and Himself enjoining upon all the duty of following closely his most blessed example: "The days will come, when the Bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." Mt. ix, 15. Let us bewail our sins during

these forty days, that we may not be destroyed, as the sinners in the day of Noe were destroyed by the deluge of forty days. Let us, at the same time, bewail the sufferings and death of our Saviour, as the children of Israel bewailed, during forty days, the death of Jacob their father. Let us, with Ninive, do penance for forty days, and, like Ninive, we shall be reconciled with God. If we fast forty days in imitation of Elias, we shall ascend, with the Prophet, the mountain of God. By remaining with his disciples in his glorified body during forty days, our Saviour reminded his faithful followers of the reward that is awaiting them, if they always bear about in their body the dying of Jesus. II Cor. iv, 10.

c. "*He was afterwards hungry.*" Of Moses and Elias who fasted also forty days and forty nights, Holy Scripture does not say, that they felt hungry. The power of God which sustained them, satiated them also. Christ voluntarily submitted to the pangs of hunger, to be similar to us in all things. If the Evangelist says, that Jesus was *afterwards* hungry, he does not mean to say, that Jesus was not hungry during the forty days, but that, at the close of the forty days, he suffered the acutest pangs of hunger.

d. This hunger, which Jesus suffered for us, has ever been the object of special devotion to pious souls, who not only sanctified their own fast by the remembrance of the fast of their Saviour, but were also anxious to appease, as it were, the hunger of Jesus. This may be done, according to B. Albert the Great, in a spiritual sense, by appeasing a three-fold hunger. (1) Jesus is hungry and thirsty in the poor. Mt. xxv, 35. Give to the poor of your abundance, and that which you saved by your fasting and greater austerity of life, and you give Jesus to eat and to drink. (2) Jesus hungers and thirsts after the conversion of sinners. When he endeavored to convert the Samaritan woman, his disciples said to him: "Rabbi, eat." "But he said to them: I have food to eat which you know not of. * * * 'Lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest." John iv, 31. Whoever is intent upon his own conversion,

and the conversion of others, spends the time of Lent according to the will of God, and appeases the hunger of Jesus. (3) He hungers after the promotion of the honor of the Father. John iv, 34. If you spend the time of Lent in pious practices, you appease the hunger of your own soul, and the hunger of Jesus.

When Satan became aware of Jesus being hungry, he may have doubted of His divinity, and may thus have been induced to tempt Him.

II.

JESUS IS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL.

1. We should not be startled at our Saviour being tempted. For, as St. Gregory the Great remarks, if it was not unworthy of the Son of God to be crucified by the slaves of the devil, still less was it unworthy of him to suffer himself to be tempted by the devil. As he conquered our death by his death, so he overcame our temptations by his temptation, that is, he merited for us by his astounding humility the strength to resist temptation. Further, he proposed to teach us that no one, however virtuous, should think himself secure against temptation; and also to teach us how we should resist the devil. Finally, he intended to inspire us with greater confidence in his mercy, wherefore the Apostle says: "It behoved him in all things to be made like to his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest with God." Heb. ii, 17.

2. We may now proceed to consider the temptation itself. The devil intended by it to find out whether He to whom John the Baptist had borne testimony, but who was poor, and now even suffering the pangs of hunger, was the true Son of God, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father. In order to explore this, he tries to lead him into sin. "He so tempts, as to explore; he so explores, as to tempt." St. Ambrose.

The temptation was similar to that of our first parents. Satan began by tempting our Saviour to gluttony; he next proceeded to allure him to vain ostentation, or the pride of life; and at last sought to entrap him to an act of contempt of God through the concupiscence of the eyes. The devil said to Jesus:

a. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It is gluttony for a hungry man to appease his hunger by means of bread produced through illicit means. Not to mention, that our Saviour had not received from his Heavenly Father the power of working miracles for a selfish end, such as to appease his hunger, but for a supernatural one. If he had exerted this divine power at the suggestion of Satan, he would have had communication with the fiend, thus procuring bread by illicit means.—Our Lord answers the fiend with the word of God, "the sword of the Spirit," for our instruction in the time of temptation, the recital of a Scriptural text being an efficacious weapon whereby to conquer the devil. He quotes Deut. viii, 3, which words refer to the Manna, so that he meant to say: "God is able, by his almighty word, to preserve man's life; wherefore there is no necessity to change these stones into bread."

We should remember, especially during Lent, that in order to sustain the life of our soul, we need the word that proceedeth from the mouth of God, and that, in order to appease the hunger of our soul, we should frequently hear the word of God, and obtain the dominion of the soul over the body by fasting and other works of penance. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv, 17. He who, without sufficient reason, does not observe the fast, deprives himself of the heavenly banquet prepared by God for his servants.

b. The second temptation was on the pinnacle of the temple. Having heard Jesus say, that we ought to put all our confidence in the Lord God, the devil forthwith tempts Him to presumption, to vain and ostentatious confidence.

This temptation is very remarkable, on account of the attempt made by the devil to persuade our Saviour by a quotation from Holy Scripture. Satan is a commentator, whom the heretics followed at all times in their way of explaining Holy Writ. He (1) misquotes Scripture by separating the words from their context, and leaving out those words which contained a refuta-

tion of the sense he would fasten on it, to-wit: "to keep thee in all thy ways." (Ps. xc, 11.) He knew very well that these words do not refer to a rash and presumptuous casting one's self down a precipice. He (2) perverts their meaning, the words of the Psalmist having reference only to those just men, who are, from necessity, thrown into danger. Keep far from those seducers who explain Holy Scripture differently from the teaching of the Church to whom the Lord has promised his assistance "all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20.

God permitted the devil to lead Jesus to the brink of the precipice; but he did not give him power to cast him down. In a similar manner, God permits our adversary to lead us to the brink of ruin, but never to ruin, against our own free will. Only let us beware of tempting God, by exposing ourselves unnecessarily to dangers of sin.

c. In the third place, Satan tries a temptation by which he hoped to find out definitely whether Jesus was the Son of God. He took Jesus up into a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, that is, "in a moment" (St. Luke), in a very short space of time, he pointed in the divers directions where the kingdoms of the world were situated, and described their glory. And said to him: "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." The devil made Jesus this offer if he would adore him as God, supposing that, if he were the Son of God, he would forthwith indignantly repel the temptation by a declaration of His divine rights, so arrogantly invaded. The devil made, however, a false promise, since the kingdoms do not belong to the prince of the world, but only those wicked men who, by their sins, voluntarily embrace his servitude.

Whilst our Lord had borne with patience the preceding temptations, he now, seeing his Father's honor very impiously assailed, indignantly drives away the tempter.

When the devil had left our Saviour, "behold Angels came and ministered to him," as servants to their Master; as creatures to their Creator. They will minister to us also, whenever we

overcome the temptations of the devil; they will carry our soul, at her separation from the body, into the bosom of the Father.

VIII.

THE SACRED PASSION A LIGHT OF OUR UNDERSTANDING, AND A GUIDE ON THE PATH OF OUR LIFE.

St. Bernard remarks that the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ still produces the same marvellous effects as at the moment of His death, when nature shook to her centre. The vail of the temple is still rent, the earth trembles, rocks are split, and graves are opened. As the vail of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, so the vail which, by reason of sin, covered our understanding, is rent, so that we now have a profound knowledge of the Divine Perfections. As the earth trembled, so the worldly-minded are struck with wholesome terror. As the rocks were split, so hardened hearts are softened. As the graves opened, from which the dead arose to life, so we open, in the confessional, our mouths that were heretofore shut, and arise to a new life. All these being the effects produced by the Sacred Passion of Christ, it is a light illuminating our understanding, and a guide on the path of our life.

I.

THE SACRED PASSION A LIGHT OF OUR UNDERSTANDING.

1. We conceive the best idea of the Divine Perfections. We behold in the clearest light

a. *Divine sanctity and justice*, which designed full satisfaction for our sins. The offence against an infinite Being demanding an infinite satisfaction could only be atoned for by everlasting torments in hell, or by infinite merits of a Redeemer.

b. *Divine charity and mercy.* The Father gave his only-begotten Son for our salvation; the Son left the glory of heaven to subject himself to all the miseries of our flesh—only for our salvation, and through mercy.

c. Divine veracity and truthfulness. God fulfilled the promise made to our first parents in Paradise, and the prophecies uttered all the ages. Therefore, in the history of the Sacred Passion, we repeatedly read the remark: "That the Scripture be fulfilled." To the disciples on their way to Emmaus "beginning from Moses, and all the prophets, Jesus expounded, in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning him." Lk. xxiv, 27.

d. Divine wisdom. God united justice and mercy in perfect harmony, because the Redeemer, as true God, was able to give satisfaction of infinite value, and as true man, he was able to give satisfaction in the strictest sense of the word, and in the name of the human race. Further, God arrayed things so, that the most wicked machinations of Judas, Caiphas, etc., promoted the holiest end.

2. The Sacred Passion enlightens us also in regard to our own dignity and destiny.

We learn from it

a. The value of our soul, for whose redemption Jesus made such terrible sacrifices, whilst we often do not acknowledge her value.

b. The dignity of the human body, which by the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus was reinvested with its original rights, since Jesus overcame death and took our glorified flesh up to heaven, enabling us to obtain the same glory for our body.

c. The abomination of sin for the atonement of which Jesus was made a curse, and the man of sorrows.

d. The value of heaven, which was opened for us again at an infinite price.

Thus the Cross of our Saviour is "not only the death-bed, but also the pulpit of Christ." St. Augustine.

II.

THE SACRED PASSION A GUIDE ON THE PATH OF OUR LIFE.

The above reflections are in general well calculated to incite us to admiration and gratitude as well as to sanctity of life and

unbounded confidence in the Lord. In particular, the Sacred Passion guides us

1. *On the path of our life*, exhorting us

a. To lead holy lives, that we may partake of the fruits of his sufferings, being far from crucifying Jesus anew by our sins. It is not excusable to despise so great and tender love, and, by a vicious life, to frustrate the cross and sufferings of Jesus.

b. To do penance. Jesus continually exhorts us to take our cross upon ourselves, to subdue our flesh with its concupiscence, to deny ourselves, that we may become worthy of participating in his glory.

c. To foster pious practices. Would that we would often, and with devotion, meditate on the Cross and sufferings of Jesus, paying homage to special phases of the Sacred Passion and drawing profit from them for our souls. How edifying and instructive is, for instance, his agony in the garden, his being mocked at, his patience not being disturbed, etc.? An abundant and never-failing source of devotion, gratitude, love, consolation, etc., is hidden in the Sacred Passion of our Lord. Innumerable are those souls who attained a high degree of sanctity by means of this meditation.

2. *On our journey into eternity.* How great will be, at the hour of death, our fear on account of our sins, our danger on account of vehement temptations, our pains on account of the approach of death! Against all this we find help in the Passion of our crucified Saviour:

a. Consolation in our fear caused by sins, because Jesus "hath blotted out the hand-writing of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, and the same he took out of the way, fastening it to the Cross." Col. ii, 14. "When the Lord shall see the blood on the transom, and on both the posts, he will pass over the door of the house, and not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses, and to hurt you." Exodus xii, 23. Thus spoke the Lord with regard to the figurative Paschal Lamb. He says the same to us if we have armed ourselves with the meditation on the death of our true Paschal Lamb.

b. Protection in all temptations. It is generally believed, and considered as self-evident, that the enemy of our salvation is to make the greatest exertions to ruin us, when he perceives, "that he hath but a short time." Apoc. xii, 12. But Jesus said: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John xii, 31. "Divesting principalities and powers, he made a show of them confidently, triumphing openly over them in himself." Col. ii, 15.

c. Consolation in all pains and afflictions. As the bitter waters were turned into sweetness, when Moses cast into them a tree shown him by the Lord (Exodus xv, 25), so the power of the Cross and the remembrance thereof has ever brought consolation and joy in the midst of the greatest pains; as for instance, to the Apostles, when they were scourged for the name of Jesus, to the innumerable army of martyrs, and to all the suffering and dying. "They do not notice their own wounds, when they behold the wounds of Jesus." St. Bernard. "In all tribulations I never found a remedy equal to the wounds of Christ." St. Augustine.

If so admirable mysteries and powers are hidden in the Cross of Christ, they are no doubt to be pitied who do not like to devote their thoughts to it. "Many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ; whose end is destruction."

Bordoni.

Second Sunday of Lent.

VII.

HOMILY.

From the mountain of temptation on which Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, the Holy Church leads us to the mountain of transfiguration, on which the heavenly Conqueror appears in celestial light. On the first mountain Jesus appeared in human frailty, tempted by Satan; here he appears in divine majesty. There he suffers the wicked spirit to approach him; here the most favored friends of God give testimony of him. In one word, on the first mountain the devil attempted to attach the heart of Jesus to the earth and its glory; on the mountain of Tabor Moses and Elias spoke to him of his Sacred Passion by which he was to overcome the world; and strengthened his disciples for the combat which was awaiting them. A foretaste of the heavenly ecstasy was granted them in the transfiguration. *The transfiguration of Christ exhorts us also not to seek the things that are upon the earth, but to seek the things that are in heaven.*

I.

THE TRANSFIGURATION EXHORTS US NOT TO SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE UPON THE EARTH.

1. Peter, John and James partake to-day of the joy and glory of their Master; but the same three Apostles are also to partake of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. For, it is a divine decree that no one is to possess two heavens, one here below, the other hereafter. For this reason, we should never envy our fellowmen, if they, like the three Apostles, on Tabor, seem to be God's favored children. They will receive their share of affliction also.

Jesus selected these three as the number of witnesses required for legal proof, to honor firm faith in Peter; martyrdom in James, the greater, who was the first of the Apostolic College to give his life for Christ, and virginity in John.

Our Lord takes his disciples into a high mountain apart. It is not below in the valley, before all the people, that he is transfigured. The mountain where our Saviour now sits in the glory of his Father, is heaven; the earth on which we live, is the vale of tears. Why then have our souls so great propensity toward the earth where we have no permanent city? Why do we not fervently long for heaven, our eternal home?

2. "And he was transfigured before them" *whilst he prayed*, as St. Luke remarks. Prayer, the spiritual union with the fountain of light, is a transfiguration of the soul, giving light to our understanding, strength to our will, and peace to our heart. This spiritual transfiguration ought to precede our transfiguration in heaven.

"His face did shine as the sun." An indiscribable splendor was diffused over the face which the Angels desire to behold.—We are also called upon to behold Jesus face to face, if we preserve in our souls the supernatural image of God, as we received it in the sacrament of baptism; or if we blot out the stains of sin by the sacrament of penance. Only those who are clean of heart, shall see God.

"And his garments became as white as snow." This snowy whiteness and shining brightness were reflected on the garments from the glorified and bright body of our Redeemer.

The garments of the soul are good works, without which she cannot be admitted to the nuptials of the Lamb. Is it not, therefore, imprudent to work for this earth, and to neglect good works, which will last for ever?

The gifts of a glorified body were due to, and natural to, the body of Jesus Christ, because of its union with the Divinity; "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally." Col. ii, 9. Therefore, our Lord's glorious transfiguration, far from being a miracle, was rather an interruption of the perpetual miracle by which the qualities of glorification were concealed. Jesus was to appear before men merely as man, because, in a state of visible glorification, he could not be mocked at, spit upon, and crucified.

Jesus threw contempt on the glory of the world, thus exhorting us not to value the "vanity of vanities."

3. "And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him." They appeared, as St. Luke says, *in majesty*, the glory of the Lord being communicated to his chosen servants.

Our Redeemer summoned Moses and Elias to be witnesses of his transfiguration; the former, as promulgator of the Law, the latter, as the representative of the Prophets, of whom he was the greatest; to show that he was not opposed to the Law and the prophets, as his enemies charged him with being; and that He was greater than any of the prophets.

The subject of their conversation, as we are informed by St. Luke, regarded "His decease, which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem." (Lk. ix, 31.)

In the midst of his glory, Jesus converses with Moses and Elias on his Sacred Passion and Death, thus remembering his last hour, his agony, even on this most glorious day. In a similar manner, we should never lose sight, even in the midst of joy, of our *decease* which we are to accomplish, without knowing either place or hour, or where and when it is to take place. Then our hearts, far from being attached to the earth and its glittering treasures, will seek those treasures which are in heaven.

II.

THE TRANSFIGURATION EXHORTS US TO SEEK ONLY THAT WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.

We are reminded of the glory of heaven, and of the way leading to heaven.

1. "And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord it is good for us to be here," etc. Peter sees only a glimpse of heavenly glory emanating from the glorified body of Jesus Christ; he sees only two Saints in majesty; he has only a foretaste of heavenly joys, and yet he is transported with happiness, and almost inebriated with delight, having no desire to leave the mountain. How great is the delight—the torrent of joy—that awaits the Elect!

Oh! eternal beatitude, overwhelming and dazzling glory, which will satisfy our souls, who are to behold God in his infinite majesty and loveliness, and to enjoy the company of all the Angels and Saints!

Who would not use all efforts to reach heaven, where it will indeed be good for us to be? The joys offered by the world are perishable; nor can they satiate our hearts. Oh! let us neither think, nor say, whilst we are on earth: "It is good for us to be here." Only in heaven the word of Peter is perfectly fulfilled: "It is good for us to be here."

2. "And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

If the transfiguration of Jesus instigated our desire for heaven, it shows us also the way leading there. Jesus Christ himself is this *way*. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John xiv, 6. And the Heavenly Father has declared, that through his Son we shall obtain life everlasting. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." Jesus is the natural, only-begotten, and therefore singularly beloved, Son of God; and is thus distinguished from the many adopted sons of God, to-wit, angels and men. In this only-begotten Son the Father takes infinite delight from all eternity; and by becoming man for us, this Son has reconciled the children of Adam to God, so that, *in Him*, the Father is well pleased with the human family.

And what does God demand of us that his complacency in us may never cease? "Hear ye Him." Believe, what my only-begotten Son has taught you; hope what he has promised you; and observe what he has commanded you. Then I shall be well pleased in you, and give you life everlasting.

Take courage. His commandments are not arduous, as is indicated by the *bright cloud* that overshadowed them, while that in which God appeared, when giving the Law to Moses, was a "*very thick one*" (Exod. xix, 16), as an indication of the New Law being the *covenant of love*, and the Old, the *covenant of terror*.

The disciples were very much afraid. "Human weakness could not bear such refulgent beams of glory; and trembling in every limb, they fell prostrate on the ground." (St. Jerome.) And Jesus said to them: "Arise, and fear not." If, in regard to human weakness, you fear also that you may not be able to keep the Lord's commandments, lift up your eyes to Jesus, putting all your confidence in him. He comes to us daily from Heaven upon our altars. He comes and touches us in Holy Communion. He consoles us by his word; he strengthens us by his grace. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."

VIII.

THE GREATEST SUFFERING ON EARTH.

"Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Isai. ii, 3), to the mount of Calvary, where the innocent Jesus was "cast out of the land of the living." (Is. liii, 8.) Many sinners would do penance, and would open to Jesus their hearts, if they would reflect on their having caused to Him who is beautiful above the sons of men, their Father, Saviour, and God, such dreadful and ignominious sufferings, that every wound of the crucified body cries out: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Lam. i, 12. Verily, the Sacred Passion of Christ is the greatest suffering ever witnessed on earth, whether we consider it in itself, or in regard to the cruelty of those who inflicted it upon him; or its frustration by the ingratitude and wickedness of those for whose salvation he endured it.

I.

IN ITSELF.

I. On account of its variety and extent, Christ "being the man of sorrows." Isai. liii, 3. He endured

1. All pains of the soul, as fear, agony, etc.
2. All pains of the body, as of his head, hands, feet, etc.

"We have seen him and there was no sightliness." Isai. lii, 2. "He was *bruised* for our sins."

II. On account of the *acuteness of every several pain.* Christ's virginal body was intensely susceptible of suffering:

1. It was a miraculous body, and, for this reason, perfect. "As the Manna was more savory, the wine at Cana more generous, so the body of Christ, having no origin from a father, was more susceptible than a common body." St. Thomas Aquinas.

2. This sacred body was created for the purpose of suffering. "God created man incorruptible." Wisd. ii, 23. But Christ "is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life for the redemption of many." Mk. x, 45. "Coming into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me" Heb. x, 5; that is, a body fit for suffering. Otherwise our Lord could not have suffered so much. One thorn in the foot enrages the lion; one thorn in his brains kills a man, etc.

III. On account of its *long duration.* The sufferings of Jesus commenced with his life. As God he foresaw

1. His own suffering. "I am ready for scourges; and my sorrow is continually before me." Ps. xxxvii, 18. "Jesus knew all things that were to come upon him." John xviii, 4. Therefore he "walked sorrowful all the day long." Ps. xxxvii, 7. "My enemies have trodden on me all the day long." Ps. lv, 5. That is a protracted death, not worthy of being called life. If Christ had had no control over his body, he would have sweat blood all his lifetime.

2. The sufferings of his faithful friends on earth, and even the torments of the condemned in hell, which he felt as if they were his own pains. "Surely he hath carried our sorrows." Isai. liii, 4.

IV. On account of the *general conspiracy* against him. No one was ever persecuted by men of the most various states of life with such general accord: by priests and laymen, by princes and the multitudes, by his countrymen and by strangers; by

Jews and Gentiles, judges and soldiers, learned men and ignorant: "Many calves have surrounded me: fat bulls have besieged me." Ps. xxi, 23.

To see himself hated by a whole people whom he loved so tenderly must have been to Jesus an ineffable grief; the more as no one had a cause to hate him. "Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me." Isai. L, 8. Yet "they are multiplied above the hairs of my head, who hate me without cause." Ps. lxviii, 5. A whole nation is ready to crucify Jesus Christ. "They that hate thee have lifted up the head." Ps. lxxxii, 3. Amongst them are found many who received special benefits from Jesus. "They repaid me evil for good, and hatred for my love." Ps. cviii, 5.

V. On account of the *betrayal of Judas*, which alone should be sufficient to cause our tenderest compassion. By it a deep wound was inflicted on the Heart of Jesus:

1. Because of the position and relation to Him of the traitor. Christ had chosen him his Apostle, had destined for him the homage of the nations and the dedication of temples, had conferred on him the power of working miracles, had washed his feet, had given himself for his food. No prince was ever betrayed with so much baseness—for thirty pieces of silver. Judas would have sold his Master even at a lower price. "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver." Mt. xxvi, 15. He accepts the offer without remonstrance. He sells because he hates.

2. Because of the consequence. Judas had been the disciple and companion of Jesus for three years, and yet, after this space of time, he was a murderer through avarice. This was a direct assault on Christ's honor. St. Hilary remarks that, in consequence of this ignominy and scandal, the soul of Jesus was grieved unto death. When Jesus made mention of this betrayal "he was troubled in spirit; and he protested, and said: Amen, amen I say to you, that one of you will betray me." John xiii, 21. He protested that he had given no occasion to this tremendous crime.—If "a man of one mind" with Jesus acted in this way, what could we expect from his enemies.

II.

IN REGARD TO HIS ENEMIES.

I. When he was seized upon.

1. Consider the insult. Jesus is seized upon at the summit of his triumph, for no other reason but this, "that the whole world went after him." Joseph of Egypt was imprisoned without guilt; but Putiphar's wife had his mantle in her possession.

2. Consider the outrages. Robbers are punished, after sentence has been passed. Christ was led to the cross as a sheep to the slaughter, wounded and bruised.

II. *Before the judgment seat.* Hatred instigates witnesses and judges. "I looked that they should do judgment, and behold inquity; and do justice, and behold a cry." Isai. v, 7. "Unjust witnesses have risen up against me; and iniquity hath lied to itself." Ps. xxvi, 12.

1. *Injustice at the proceedings.* Christ is summoned to defend himself; yet when he answers, he receives a blow in his face; when he is silent, it is explained as a confession of guilt. A Roman tribunal displays less sense for justice, than wild sailors in the roaring of the tempest, who would not cast Jonas overboard without self-accusation, although the lot had designed him as the criminal.

2. *Injustice of the sentence.* Many have been sentenced to death without guilt, as for instance, *Socrates*; but the judge never proclaimed their innocence. Only Christ is "the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi, 7), so that a judge declared, he could not take his life by justice, but he would take it by judgment. Sitting on his judgment-seat, Pilate said: "Why what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him; I will chastise him, *therefore*." "But they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And Pilate gave sentence, that their petition should be granted." Lk. xxiii, 22. Innocence could not protect Christ, Pilate knowing that he had been delivered through envy.

3. *The absurdity of the sentence.* Justice demands a particular and fixed punishment to be inflicted on the culprit, which the executioners have no right to change; "but Jesus he delivered up to their *will*." Lk. xxiii, 25.

III. *During the execution of the punishment.*

1. *The arbitrary cruelty* of the executioners.

a. According to the Jewish Laws, the stripes wherewith offenders were beaten, should not exceed the number of forty. Deut. xxv, 3. As for Christ, this law was not observed, neither the number of the executioners, nor of the stripes, nor the kind of rods to be used, being fixed.

b. They designed the crowning with thorns, and reviling.

b. Jesus had to carry his cross publicly through the streets, in midday.

d. At the crucifixion itself "they have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind." Mt. xvii, 12.

2. The *public ignominy.* Jesus was hanging on the cross—naked; between two thieves and murderers. This is the ignominy he complained of, saying: "You are come out as against a robber." Mt. xxvi, 55. A thief and assassin—Barabbas—was preferred to Jesus.

"Let us condemn him to a most shameful death." Wisd. ii, 20. Crucifixion was the most shameful death; Jesus suffered it in presence of the multitudes. The ignominy was so great, as to be known to God alone: "Thou knowest my reproach and confusion, and my shame." Ps. lxviii, 20. "He underwent the cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii, 2.

3. *His abandonment.* "I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort me, and I found none." Ps. lxviii, 21. "I looked about, and there was none to help." Isai. lxiii, 5. The disciples had fled; the Father had forsaken him; the Mother, and the disciple, whom Jesus loved, were plunged in ineffable sorrow, which was a cause of new grief to him. The women were looking on

afar off. Mk. xv, 40. His enemies mocked him. Mt. xxvii, 29.

4. The *wound inflicted by the spear.* Hard-hearted warriors have shed tears over the corpse of their enemy. Christ is not spared, even after death. "One of the soldiers opened his side with a spear." John xix, 34.

III.

IN REGARD TO ITS FRUSTRATION.

1. One is inclined to suppose that, after so great sufferings in order to pay the ransom of sin, no one would dare to sin anymore. The reverse is the case. There are many who even abuse the name of Christ blasphemously, and tread his Sacred Blood under foot.

2. After such urgent invitations of Jesus, who thirsts after our salvation, one might think that men would thankfully profit by them. Yet many seem to say with those revilers: "Come down from the cross"—thy sufferings are in vain. Nevertheless, God endured even sinners, and has suffered death even for future sins. "My people, why do you prefer serving mine enemy and yours rather than your Saviour? Perhaps I failed by redeeming you without asking your permission." St. Bernard. "Return to me, for I have redeemed thee." Isai. xliv, 22. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Is. liii, 6. "The charity of Christ presseth us. Christ died for all; that they also, who live, may not now live to themselves but to him, who died for them." II Cor. v, 14, 15.

Yea, "to him my soul shall live" Ps. xxi, 31. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." I Cor. xvi, 22.

P. Segneri.

Third Sunday of Lent.

VII.
HOMILY.

The relation of to-day's Gospel to the Gospels for the First and Second Sunday of Lent, as well as to the time of Lent in general, is plain and obvious. On the First Sunday we saw our Lord combating against, and conquering, the devil. To-day we see in the unhappy man who was possessed by the devil, and delivered from him by Christ, the whole human race involved in the same combat. The deliverance of that unhappy man symbolizes the deliverance of us all through Jesus Christ. And if these two Gospels, for the First and Third Sunday of Lent, represent to our minds the spiritual combat with Satan, the Gospel for the Second Sunday reminds us of the crown and glory that is awaiting us if we gain the victory over our enemy. The relation to the time of Lent in general is manifest from its being a time of struggle and of preparation for future struggles. To render the explanation of to-day's Gospel plainer, I will divide my exposition of it into three parts:

I. Jesus casts out a dumb devil.

II. Jesus defends himself against the assaults of his enemies.

III. Jesus speaks of the return of the unclean spirit.

I.

JESUS CASTS OUT A DUMB DEVIL.

1. "At that time: Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke." Jesus was casting a devil out of a man whom he had made dumb and also *blind*, according to Mt. xii, 22. Possessions by the devil are in the New Covenant, in the kingdom of Christ, of rare occurrence; but it is often the case that Christians are spiritually possessed by the devil. It is the case with every one of us who is in the state of mortal sin. "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are

whom you obey?" Rom. vi, 16. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." I John iii, 8. Sinners are said to be held by the devil captives at his will. II Tim. ii, 26.

It is generally a *dumb* devil by which sinners are possessed. The wolf is said to attack the sheep by its throat, that it may not be able to cry for help. In a similar manner, the devil prevents the sinner from praying, knowing that fervent prayer would snatch him out of his jaws. He does not suffer him either to confess at all, or to confess sincerely. Oh! whoever is in mortal sin, let him consider himself as possessed by the devil! To be bodily possessed by him does not decide for eternity; to be spiritually possessed by him, is to be condemned, unless Jesus, before death approaches, converts the sinner and casts out the devil.

Let us, therefore, do true penance in this sacred season; and let us pray for all sinners, especially for those belonging to this congregation, that at least on Easter Sunday, there may be none amongst them possessed with the devil.

2. "And the multitude were in admiration at it; but some of them said: He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven." The common people were transported with astonishment and said: "Is not this the Son of David?" that is, the Messias? How striking a contrast to the fiendish malignity of the Pharisee, who ascribed the miraculous works of Jesus to diabolical influences! Do we not observe the same perversity in our days, and at all times? "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise." I Cor. i, 27.

The Pharisees said: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub." Beelzebub, "*Lord of flies*," an idol of the Accaronites, so called, either because he was invoked by them against the plague of flies, or because the blood of victims, with which he was besmeared, attracted the flies, and caused the idol to be covered all over with them, was such an object of horror and execration to the Jews, that they designated the prince of devils by that name.

(IV Kings i, 3.) To those who demanded a sign from heaven Jesus gave no answer: a sign will be given them at the consummation of the world. To those who ascribed his miracles to diabolical agency, he deigned to give an answer.

II.

JESUS DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST THE ASSAULTS OF HIS ENEMIES.

Jesus condescends to endeavor to convince his enemies by plain inferences that his miracles are not the work of the devil.

1. "But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils." If one devil, vested with greater power, eject another devil, then "he is divided against himself;" and his kingdom must necessarily fall; which is not to be supposed of so crafty an enemy of God's kingdom. On the contrary, however great the discord and hatred of the evil spirits among themselves may be, in their aim to destroy the kingdom of God they are of one accord.

In our days, the kingdom of Satan is propagated especially by two demons: the demon of pride, carrying the standard of infidelity; and the demon of inordinate desire for enjoyments. Satan's victory is facilitated by the discord of good Christians among themselves, by want of solidarity, as it is manifested, for instance, at the time of elections.

2. "Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub: by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges." Whether we understand by "*your children*" the Jewish exorcists who, by the invocation of God, expelled devils; or the disciples of Jesus, who were also children of the Jews; the sense is about the same: "If you dare not say, that your own children cast out the devil by the devil, because it appears to you both as an insult and as nonsense, why do you ascribe the same act when performed by me, to the devil?" Hence your own

children will prove against you, that you were actuated by hatred and malignity.

After this refutation, our Redeemer draws the conclusion: "But if I, by the finger of God, cast out the devils: doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you." The kingdom of God is come to you by me who destroy the kingdom of the enemy of God.

Our Saviour says that he, *by the finger of God*, casts out devils. The Holy Fathers understand by this *finger* the Holy Ghost, who is called the *finger* of God, because he distributes the gifts of God to angels and men. Therefore Mt. xii, 28 instead of *finger of God*, the *spirit of God* is mentioned; and as well in Mk. iii, as in Mt. xii, the charge of the Pharisees, that Jesus expelled the devils by Beelzebub, is called a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and this blasphemy is set in contrast to a blasphemy uttered against the Son of man.

Our Saviour had deduced from his power of expelling devils, that he was come to establish the kingdom of God; and how well-founded this deduction was, he explained by the following similitude: "When a strong man armed keepeth his court: those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger man than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils." The strong man is the devil; but Jesus Christ, by expelling the devil, manifests himself stronger than the devil, as his conqueror, the destroyer of his kingdom.

"He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." In these words, which, most likely, expressed a proverb in use amongst the Jews, our Saviour calls the attention of his hearers to the fact, that Satan far from being neutral, was his declared enemy; wherefore it was impossible that He should be wielding his power.

III.

JESUS SPEAKS OF THE RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

After having refuted the charges brought against Him,

Jesus now proceeds to tell the Pharisees, his accusers, that they are under the thraldrom of the devil. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water," etc. These words contain a parable, which supposes a man, who having been driven out of his abode, wanders through the wilderness, and not knowing where to abide, returns to his old home.

1. It is remarkable that the unclean spirit returns with seven other spirits (the number *seven* being in contrast to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost), because hereby the worse condition of the relapsed is intimated. "The last state of that man becometh worse than the first."—It is also worthy of notice, that the devil is said to walk through places without water, seeking rest, and not finding; by which we are informed, that every abode, except a human soul, appears to him as a wilderness, because his hatred and envy are not satisfied but by the destruction of the divine image.

2. This similitude applies directly to the Pharisees and Scribes, who, by accepting the Divine Law, had been delivered from the devil; but by abusing this grace, had returned to a far more degrading service of him. Yet its truth is general and perpetual. Of all who, after their conversion, relapsed into their former sins, it is said, that the last state becometh worse than the first.

In contrast to the wicked charges uttered by the Pharisees, a woman from the crowd lifting up her voice, pronounced the praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This woman fulfills the prophecy of Mary: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." The Holy Church will continue praising Mary to the consummation of the world.—The reply of our Saviour contains not only a confirmation of the praises uttered by that woman, but also a sweet promise made to all Christians. "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it;" as if to say: "Truly blessed is my Mother, but more by receiving the Word of God into her heart in faith, love and

humility, than bodily into her womb. Let us also strive for this spiritual union and relationship with Jesus in faith, charity and humility; in hearing the word of God and keeping it.

VIII.

THE SACRED WOUNDS OF OUR SAVIOUR.

They cannot be separated either from the suffering, or the glorified, God-man. "What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands?" Zach. xiii, 6. They are signs of the suffering, and of the victory, of Christ, and at the same time, eloquent tongues (St. Ambrose) and a medicine; for a healing power like that which healed the woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, proceeds from these wounds. They are, therefore,

I.

A SERMON ADDRESSED TO ALL MEN.

1. *An admonition to do penance*, addressed to the sinners.

a. The sacred hands will say: "The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength; the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me. The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength. I shall not die but live; and shall declare the works of the Lord." Ps. cxvii, 16. The right hand of the Lord hath delivered you from captivity; but you often prefer a mess of pottage to your inheritance. "In the left hand riches and glory" (Prov. iii, 16), sanctifying grace and true faith. Still, your morals may often not differ from those of the heathen. "I was like a foster-father to Ephraim: I carried them in my arms." Osee xi, 3.

b. The sacred feet were ever intent upon your salvation. "He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the land," to seek Jonas and the lost sheep. (Apoc. x, 2.)

c. The sacred side speaks to the heart of the sinner. "My son, give me thy heart." Prov. xxiii, 26.

2. *A consolation to the just.* "Good words, comfortable words." Zach. i, 13.

a. The hands of our Saviour have, with iron nails, written their names in the book of life. Isai. xl.

b. His hands have pointed out to them the way leading to heaven—a rough, but straight road.

c. As to his heart, he invites all who labor and are heavy laden to dwell there, where they shall find rest for their souls. As the wounds do not forsake him, so he does not forsake the wounded.

3. *An admonition for all to suffer patiently*, afflictions being

a. Necessary. The King of kings, the Holy of holies, the all-powerful God, went voluntarily before us the royal way of the cross. We ought to resemble our crucified Head.

b. Honorable. Christ carries his wounds as marks of distinction in heaven. Lk. xxiv, 26.

c. Consolatory, because we drink the chalice of the Son of God. The Apostles "indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing." Act. v, 41.

II.

THEY ARE A HELP.

1. A healing help to the blind souls on earth, that is, to sinners, who are called blind, because they prefer perishable things to everlasting things. The sacred wounds heal this spiritual blindness. "Indeed this was a just man." "And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts." Lk. xxiii, 47. "And they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son: and they shall grieve over him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born." Zach. xii, 10. We shall be convinced of the grievousness of sin, and

a. Of the necessity of contrition, our Saviour being wounded in such a cruel manner. "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins." Isai. liii, 5.

b. Of the necessity of penance and satisfaction.

Christ was so cruelly wounded, because he appeared in the form of a sinner. Verily, "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x, 31.

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps." I Pet. ii, 21. If Christ has suffered so much for the sins of others, how great ought to be our zeal in doing penance for our own sins!

c. Of perseverance in doing penance, lest, by relapsing, we wound Christ anew. "They shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord." Soph. i, 17.

3. *A rescue to suffering souls in purgatory.*

a. It is their *only help.* "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." Heb. ix, 22. Without the sacred wounds of Jesus, neither the indulgences of the Church, nor the intercession of the faithful, would be of any avail.

b. It is a *superabundant help.* The most precious blood of Jesus is sufficient for the redemption of countless worlds. "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him plentiful redemption." Ps. cxxix, 7. We should, of our abundance, impart to the souls in purgatory, as a wealthy brother makes his poor brother partake of his wealth.

c. It is a *sure help.* Christ died for all; he opened Paradise for all. The Lord is anxious to deliver his best friends out of prison, if we apply to them the merits of Christ. Justice must be done; the last farthing must be paid.

The charity of Christ, by virtue of which he communicated to us all grace and consolation through the channels of his wounds, should induce us to return love for love, to rejoice in sufferings, to despise sensual pleasures, in one word—to imitate Christ.

Virgil Wenkerose.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

VII.
HOMILY.

To-day we commemorate the august mystery of which the Angelus bell reminds us three times in a day. It is a festival of the Blessed Virgin, who, by her free consent, conceived by the Holy Ghost the Son of God made man. It is also a festival of the Son of God, who on this day became man. And it is our festival too, since it is the nature of us all to which the Son of God was espoused on this blessed day.

The Gospel of to-day, in which the mystery of the Annunciation is related, may be divided into three parts according to the three addresses of the Angel of the Lord.

I.

THE FIRST ADDRESS OF THE ANGEL.

The Angel who was chosen by God to announce the mystery of the Incarnation, is Gabriel, that is *fortitude of God.* He was sent to a virgin, whose name was Mary, that is *Star of the sea.* She is the Virgin whom the Patriarchs and Prophets foretold, the Virgin who should conceive and bear a son, whose name *Emmanuel*, God in our midst.

1. "And the Angel being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women."

The Angel came in to Mary, who according to an immemorable tradition, was absorbed in prayer, longing and praying for the Saviour. The more she approached God by prayer, the more God approached her.—Would that all those who wish to lead a pure and virginal life would seek shelter in the retirement from the world, in holy solitude!

The Angel said to Mary: "Hail, Mary, full of grace," etc. Heretofore men had paid homage to the Angels (Abraham, Jacob, Gedeon, and others). For the Angels surpassed men, according

to St. Thomas Aquinas, in a three-fold manner: in the greater dignity of their nature, which is purely spiritual; in their more familiar conversing with God; and in the greater light of divine grace imparted to them. But to-day an Angel pays homage to a human being, to a virgin, because she surpassed all the Angels in this treble respect.

Mary was *full of grace.* Not only was her soul filled with divine grace, but also her body, so that she was worthy to receive into her pure, virginal womb the Son of God; and from her all graces were poured out upon all men, since all graces are conferred by God through her.

Mary was superior to the Angels for her greater familiarity with God, as St. Gabriel intimates by the words: "The Lord is with thee." Thou art to God in the relation of a mother to her son, whereas the relation of the Angels to God is that of servants to their Lord.

Finally, Mary surpassed the holy Angels in *purity.* For whilst God found fault with them, he says of the Blessed Virgin: "Thou art all fair, O my love; and there is not a spot in thee." Cant. iv, 7.—Being exempt from sin, she was also exempt from the curse of sin, since she conceived her Son without detriment to her virginity, and bore him without throes; and her sacred body was never to return unto dust, not being given to corruption. For she being the blessed among women, was to be the sanctuary of the Son of God.

For these reasons an Angel pays homage to a human being.

2. No less admirable than the angelic salutation, is the manner in which Mary received it. "And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be."

The Blessed Virgin is not represented as being troubled at *the apparition* of an Angel; she was probably favored with a familiar conversation with holy Angels from her infancy; and that she should have feared the presence of Gabriel because she was a timid virgin, and deemed her virginity not secure where there was not a shadow of danger, seems to be utterly inadmissible.

The Evangelist has it recorded in plain words, that Mary, "when she had heard, was troubled at his *saying*." She was troubled at the salutation of an Angel because of her profound humility. What a contrast to the first Eve, who far from being troubled at the flatteries of a wicked angel, listened to them with complacency!—We are so much inclined not to acknowledge our faults, whilst we listen with avidity to praises and flatteries of our own selves. Let us never forget that true humility receives its sure reward by God, whilst pride is succeeded by humiliation.

The *singular prudence* of the Blessed Virgin commands also our admiration. "She thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." St. Thomas remarks: "She did not resist by unbelief, nor did she receive the message with levity, thus avoiding both the credulity of Eve, and the slowness of Zacharias in believing.—How alarming is our imprudence! How often have young people every reason to reflect on what that greeting, those flatteries, should be!

II.

SECOND ADDRESS OF THE ANGEL.

1. "And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God," etc. The Angel appeases the mind of the Blessed Virgin, who was troubled because of her humility, by restricting her praises to the grace which she had found with God. For true humility consists not in denying the grace of God, but in giving the honor to God for all benefits and exaltations.

The Angel goes on to explain to Mary the grace which she has found with God. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus," etc. The words in which the Angel announces the good tidings are almost verbal quotations from Holy Scripture, as though he said: "Remember that the Prophet once prophesied of a great sign: a virgin who should conceive and bear a son whose name should mean 'Emmanuel, God with us.'" Thou art this virgin, and thy child will be God. The Lord has revealed the name of

his Son to me, his messenger; it is the name of Jesus, before which every knee should bow. Thy Son shall be great, not only by human greatness, but as the Son of the Most High, and therefore great by nature. But, according to the prophets, the Messias is to be a true man also, and an offspring of David's race; and therefore the Son of God is to take the human nature from thy own substance, in thy virginal womb.

What is Mary to reply? An honor, greater than which divine omnipotence cannot confer, is offered her; and the salvation of the world is dependent on her consent.

2. "And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man?" In these words the Blessed Virgin does not express a doubt of the truth of what had been announced to her, but only asks with all humility an explanation concerning the manner in which the great mystery is to be accomplished in her, as she had made the vow of perpetual virginity. We admire her tender *virginal purity*. She was the first, no doubt actuated by the Holy Ghost, to vow to God a virginal life, and thus to sow the seed of the countless snow-white lilies that were to spring up in the Church of the Son of "the Virgin of virgins," and of the "Queen of virgins." If we love the Blessed Mother of God, let us imitate her in the love of purity, and we shall behold God.

III.

THIRD ADDRESS OF THE ANGEL.

1. "And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." In these words the Holy Angel gives an explanation of how she could conceive and bear a child, and yet remain a virgin. He said to her, that she was to conceive the Son of God by the Holy Ghost, that her Son would not be the son of a man, but the Son of the Most High. He calls her attention to the fact that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived in her old age, and that no word is impossi-

ble with God.—Let us adore, with humility, the mystery of the Incarnation, and not hesitate in our faith. God who formed Adam out of the slime of the earth, and Eve out of Adam's rib, is no doubt able to form a human body in the womb of a virgin, without the co-operation of a man.

2. "And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." In these words the Blessed Virgin gives her consent; and at the same moment when she calls herself the handmaid of the Lord, she is elevated to the dignity of the Mother of God. Oh! let us never forget this holy word; let us remember the holy mystery performed after the utterance of this word, especially three times every day, when the Angelus-bell reminds us of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and of the elevation of the Virgin of Nazareth above all creatures.

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

VII.

HOMILY.

The miraculous bread in to-day's Gospel is a figure of the true bread descending from heaven, the Holy Eucharist. For Holy Eucharist was also instituted when the pasch was near at hand, and in the *evening*, that strengthened by this bread *in the desert* of this life, we may reach the true Canaan, our heavenly abode. Therefore the Holy Church, in order to induce her children to make a due preparation for their Easter Communion, has the Gospel of the miraculous bread read on this Sunday. And I believe I am acting according to the intention of the Church, if, following the traces of the Gospel, I recall to your memory how you should behave before, and after, Holy Communion.

I.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

Our preparation for Holy Communion concerns both the body and the soul; and in either regard we may take an example from the people who received the miraculous bread.

1. "At that time: Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased." Jesus retired with his disciples in a boat across the sea of Galilee into a desert place apart, to give his Apostles, who had returned from their mission, respite and leisure for retreat after their labors. The multitude seeing him enter the boat, followed him on foot. In their zeal they did not think of taking food with them, so that they were fasting all day.

Does the Holy Church require as much of us as this pious people did voluntarily, when she demands that we should be fasting on Communion day; that is, that from twelve o'clock the night before we should not have taken the least thing by way of eating

or drinking—a command given under pain of grievous sin, in order to prevent great abuses which might follow from the disregard of this law!—Besides, when you approach the altar you must be decently dressed, which requires less exertion than the people displayed who went a long distance, in order to come to Jesus. A poor dress, however, cannot afford a legitimate excuse for not receiving Holy Communion.—You must also show your reverence for the Most Blessed Sacrament by your external behavior, with hands joined and raised, and eyes cast down, in the same attitude as you behold the priest at the foot of the altar.

2. "Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples." Jesus sought a place to rest; but he did not rest long. For when he saw the great multitude, "he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." Mk. vi, 34. "And he received them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and healed them who had need of healing." Lk. ix, 11. Hence you see, with how great solicitude Jesus prepared the multitude for the great miracle he was about to perform.

He instructed the people, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God. This was the *preparation of the soul.* The holy Church does the same. She instructs you by sermons and devotions, which are more frequent in Lent than at other times. She speaks to you of the kingdom of God, which is every soul when cleansed from sin, and adorned with virtues.

Your soul is called upon, especially in this sacred time, to become a kingdom, a house of God, that she may worthily receive, by her Easter Communion, Jesus Christ her God and her King. Before Jesus distributed the miraculous bread to the multitude, he healed all those who were in need of healing. And before you are permitted to eat the Paschal Lamb, you must make your annual confession, that each disease of your soul may be healed, and that every sin may be taken away from you through the sacrament of penance. May not one of you venture to receive his Easter Communion without repenting of his sins! Mind the warning of St. Paul: "Let a man prove

himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." I Cor. xi, 28.

II.

DEVOTION AT THE TIME OF RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION.

You have been taught, that the best exercises before Holy Communion are the acts of faith, hope, and charity. And what else but faith, hope and charity is the miracle of to-day's Gospel calculated to kindle within us?

1. Let us first learn from our Lord to believe what seems to be incredible. "When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" The disciples did not believe, that so many men could be fed and satiated with a few loaves of bread. And when, on the next day, our Lord spoke of the Holy Eucharist, the Jews said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" True, by human power neither the one nor the other is possible. But "no word shall be impossible with God." We believe the word of the Lord: "Take ye and eat: This is my body."

2. No less must we hope in God's omnipotence and bounty. Without answering one word to the remark of Philip or of Andrew, Jesus said to his disciples: "Make the men sit down * * * The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand."—"He took the five loaves and two fishes; and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes." Mt. xiv, 19. The Holy Evangelists relate the institution of the Holy Eucharist in

a similar way. "Taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is my body which is given for you. * * * This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, the which shall be shed for you." Lk. xxii, 19, 20.

Who does not see, that the multiplication of bread in the desert was, as it were, the preparation for the change of bread into Christ's body at the Last Supper? The disciples of the Lord distribute still his sacred body under the species of bread. How much are we entitled to hope through this heavenly food? We are nourished for life everlasting. Therefore, whenever you approach Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament, put an infinite confidence in Jesus, who said: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi, 55.

3. Greater than faith and hope ought to be our love, when we receive Holy Communion. How great must have been the delight of the multitude, and their love for Jesus, their benefactor, when they were eating the multiplied bread, and all were filled, there remaining yet twelve baskets full of fragments.

But when does Jesus show his tender love more clearly, than in the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar? Here he continues his love manifested on the Cross, by shedding his precious blood. Where is a heart that would not be moved to ardent love toward Jesus, at the remembrance of his words: "Take ye and eat: This is my body. Take ye and drink: This is the chalice of my blood. Do this for a commemoration of me." Is it possible to receive Jesus, your father and brother and bridegroom, without loving him from the bottom of your heart?

III.

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

1. The people in the desert proved thankful for the supper which Jesus had prepared for them. "Those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone."

2. We should also after Holy Communion give fervent thanks for the infinite charity that induced Jesus to invite us to the celestial Banquet. Let us, like the multitude of the Gospel, give thanks in word and deed: in word, by conversing with Jesus yet for a time and praising his infinite mercy; in deed, by making Jesus our king, obeying his command, and becoming better men. Jesus himself says: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." John vi, 57. It is an infallible sign of a worthy Communion, if after its reception we live so, as if Jesus were living in us, that is, with such humility, chastity, meekness, kindness, as was admired in the life of Jesus.

VIII.

THE EFFECTS WHICH THE DEATH OF JESUS SHOULD PRODUCE IN OUR SOULS.

Never was the death of man accompanied with such marvellous events as the death of Jesus. "The vail of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom: and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose; and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the Centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God." Mt. xxvii, 51-54. The Holy Church presents to our spiritual eyes the scenes of the dying Saviour, with the intention that it may produce in our hearts wholesome effects. These desired effects are as follows:

I.

THE DEATH OF OUR SAVIOUR SHOULD CONFIRM OUR FAITH.

Jesus gave testimony to his being the Son of God

1. *By his death.*

a. Because Jesus professed himself to be the Son of God, he was found guilty of death. Lk. xxii, 66-71.

b. The Chief-priests and Scribes asserted, when he was hanging on the Cross, that he had said: "I am the Son of God." Mk. xxvii, 43.

c. The Centurion exclaimed: "Indeed this man was the Son of God." Mk. xv, 39.

2. *By his superhuman patience*, with which he suffered on the Cross. "He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." Isai. liii, 7.

3. *By the sanctity and innocence* in which he died. "Many bore false witness against him; and their evidence did not agree." Mk. xiv, 56. Pilate declared publicly: "I find no cause in this man.—You have brought this man to me, as one that perverted the people: and, behold, I having examined him before you, find no cause in this man touching those things wherein you accuse him." Lk. xxiii, 4, 14.

II.

THE DEATH OF JESUS SHOULD ENLIVEN OUR HOPE.

1. Jesus, by his death, *has reconciled the Heavenly Father.*

a. By him we have been justified. "As by the offence of one, unto all men to condemnation: so also by the justice of one, unto all men unto justification of life." Rom. v, 18.

b. He became our Mediator with God. "There is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all." I Tim. ii, 5.

c. He became our intercessor with the Heavenly Father. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." I John ii, 1.

2. *He has satisfied Divine Justice.* "He hath blotted out the hand-writing of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, and the same he took out of the way, fastening it to the cross." Col. ii, 14.

3. He has merited for us all graces. The blood of Christ shall "cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." Heb. ix, 14. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus iii, 5.

4. He has obtained for us infinite merits. "I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labor." John iv, 38. "Ascending on high, he led captivity captive: he gave gifts to men." Eph. iv, 8.

III.

THE DEATH OF JESUS SHOULD ENKINDLE OUR LOVE:

1. The love of God. "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" Lk. xii, 49. The Holy Fathers understand by "*the fire*" the fire of divine love. "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." I John iv, 19.

2. The love of Jesus Christ. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." John xii, 32. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." I Cor. xvi, 22.

3. The love of our fellow-men. Jesus has taught it by his example. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13. He has made it our strict duty. "I give you a new commandment: That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." John xiii, 34. "Dearly beloved, let us love one another: for charity is of God. And every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." I John iv, 7.

Well then, let us give testimony to Jesus by a vivid faith in his divinity. Let us embrace the Cross as the anchor of our salvation; and nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Tirinus.

Passion Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel of this day relates the last attempt of Jesus to induce the people to believe in him as the Son of God and their Messias. Heretofore he had called on the Heavenly Father as witness, who by a voice from heaven, and by innumerable miracles, had given testimony to Jesus of Nazareth. Now Jesus appeals to his own testimony, protesting that, on account of the holiness of his life, the Jews are bound to believe his testimony concerning himself.

As for us, the Gospel contains a plain assertion of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the belief in which is necessary to understand the Sacred Passion. We may divide the Gospel into two parts; in the first, Jesus asserts that He is the Holy of holies, in the second, that he is from eternity.

I.

JESUS THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

1. "At that time: Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?" Jesus appeals in these words to his immaculate life as an evidence of the truth of his doctrine. We all are sinners, and whoever denies that he is a sinner, is a liar, as St. John says. In Jesus not a shadow of fault or imperfection was found. Therefore Jesus was right in charging the Jews with their unbelief, because it was self-evident that a man of so great sanctity could not be an impostor.

2. Jesus, also, confronts the Jews with the reason of not believing Him in spite of his sanctity. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God." He is of God who is a child of God, who is in communion with God by fulfilling his holy will.

Our Saviour assigns here the true explanation of infidelity

at all times. The arguments for the divine origin of the Christian doctrine are perfectly convincing. But of what avail are the best arguments to him who keeps his eyes closed, because the darkness of his vices hates the light? Faith is not the solution of an arithmetical problem the correctness of which we cannot but concede; but it is the work of divine grace and of man's co-operation, wherein its merit consists. Lead such a life that you may never have reason to fear the doctrine of Christ, and you shall never doubt it.

Oh! that all of you would seek and find the delight of your souls in hearing the word of God! Then you would be children of God and heirs of heaven. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God."

3. What do the Jews answer to the urgent admonitions of Jesus to believe in him. "The Jews therefore answered and said to him: Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" They had dishonored Jesus by the same contumelious words on other occasions also. By calling him a Samaritan, they charged him with the adulteration of the Mosaic religion, and of enmity against the Jewish nation. Infinitely greater was the contumely contained in the words, "Thou hast a devil," uttered against Him who, to quote the words of St. Augustine, was come not only to save men, but also to conquer the devil.

The deeper and the more blasphemous the affront, the more must we admire his patience and meekness. With undisturbed calmness he rejects the affront, saying: "I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me." The aim of all my words and deeds is to promote the honor of my Father, wherein certainly nothing devilish can be found. What then shall I say about those who, notwithstanding, disgrace me by saying, that I have a devil? Our Saviour does not continue his self-defence, but leaves it in humility to Him who seeketh the honor of the Son and judgeth.

Let us also leave the defence and protection of our honor to Him who judgeth, often in this life, yet certainly on the Day of reckoning.

II.

JESUS THE ETERNAL GOD.

1. Jesus instead of being exasperated by their outrage, continues his endeavor to convince the Jews of his divinity. I am not to avenge myself, says Jesus, for the outrage inflicted on me, leaving all judgment to the Father. I can only repeat, that I have taught you the truth, and that all who observe my words, shall live by them. "Amen, amen, I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever." Our Lord evidently intends, by *death*, the second, the eternal death; this being the proper death, in comparison with which the first death is but a transit into a better world.

We should engrave also this one truth deeply in our souls. Jesus has suffered temporal death, that we may be delivered from eternal death.

2. The Jews, through malignity, understood our Saviour to speak of temporal death. "The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever," etc. Jesus replies that he has nothing to revoke; but he deigns to explain to his revilers what entitles him to claim such high prerogatives. The dignity which he claims is founded on his relation to the Father, with whom he is consubstantial, so that he thinks it no robbery to be equal to God. (Philip. ii, 6.) The Father glorifieth him, by generating him from all eternity as his substantial image; and he glorifieth him before men by giving testimony to his sonship (Mt. iii, 17; xvii, 5), and by innumerable miracles, and by committing all judgment to him. (John. v, 22.)

From this we see that our own glory, resulting from corporeal or spiritual advantages, is nothing; but it is our Father that glorifieth us. The dignity of man consists in his being a child of God, or in other words, in being invested with sanctifying grace—a glory elevating him above kings.

3. "It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say

that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him." The Jews boasted of having God for their Father; but by their deeds they denied him.

"But I know him," etc. Jesus knows God, because he is the Son of God. "I know him, because I am from him." John vii, 29. In consequence of this perfect knowledge he was entitled to say: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." viii, 12.

"But I know him and do keep his word,"—in contrast to the Jews, who did not keep the word of God.

4. Jesus now gives *direct* answer to the above question: "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?" He says: "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad." Abraham was desirous to see the day, on which the Son of God would descend from heaven to take human nature. He saw this day; that is, he received a revelation in Limbo, that this blessed day was come; and he was glad. But if Abraham was desirous to see my day, I am greater than he.—You call Abraham *your Father.* Why then are you such degenerate sons? Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and you revile and blaspheme me!

"The Jews therefore said to him:—Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you. Before Abraham was made, I am." The Jews being unwilling to acknowledge the divine dignity of Jesus, mocked him by reminding him of his age, imagining that they were connecting him with an absurdity.

But Jesus told them, they were mistaken if they took him only for a mere man. Verily, (this is the meaning of his words) I did see Abraham. For I was before him; I am the same who said to Moses: "I am who am" (Exod. iii, 14); "the beginning, who also speak unto you." John viii, 25. St. Augustine remarks appropriately, that Jesus did not say: Before Abraham *was*, but *was made.* Nor does he say: "I am made," for He *was not made*, but *was.*

Behold the meekness and patience of Jesus, who, in spite of their grievous contumelies, continues to explain to the Jews his origin.

The Jews understood the words of Jesus in the above sense. For "they took up stones therefore to cast at him"—the punishment of a blasphemer. But Jesus, whose hour was not as yet come, hid himself. "He fled from the stones; but woe to those from whose stony hearts he flees!" St. Augustine.

VIII.
THE GREATEST CHARITY.

True friendship is tested in tribulation. He who shares afflictions with his friend, who disposes of his property, and employs his talents and his precious time in order to remove the obstacles in the way of his friend's happiness,—is a true friend. And he who sacrifices his own life for his friend, without any selfish motive, has reached the highest degree of charity. Such a friend is presented to us as hanging on the Cross! It is Jesus of Nazareth, who once said: "I lay down my life for my sheep." John x, 15. Let us make the infinite charity of Jesus the subject of our present meditation.

The charity of Jesus is manifest

I.
FROM HIS LIFE.

Evidences of this charity are:—

1. *His miracles which he wrought*, as for instance,

a. His Incarnation. Charity induced him to leave the glory of his Heavenly Father and to become our friend and brother. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son." John iii, 16. "In this is charity: not as if we have loved God, but because he first loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins." I John iv, 10.

b. The healing of the sick. It is love that induced him to restore the sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb.

c. Raising the dead to life. What else but love moved him to give the young man at Naim to his mother, the daughter of Jairus to her parents, Lazarus to his sisters?

2. *The doctrine which he preached.* Its principal point was the urgent command, and the most earnest exhortation to love God, and all men, enemies not excepted. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mt. xxii, 37. "But I say to you: Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." v, 44. And this love was to help men to their temporal and eternal happiness.

3. *All his actions.* He was benevolent and loving (*a*) toward all men, feeding the hungry, consoling the suffering, instructing the ignorant, pardoning the sinners; (*b*) toward his disciples. How great was his patience in enduring their incredulity and unstableness! (*c*) Toward his enemies. Derided and mocked, even on the Cross, he prays for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Lk. xxiii, 34. And how touching was his pity on Jerusalem!

II.

FROM HIS SACRED PASSION.

Jesus suffered through love and friendship for men

1. *Great pains in his body.* Behold him hanging on the Cross, his head crowned with thorns, his hands and feet pierced with nails, his entire body bruised and wounded. And for what? "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed." Isai. liii, 5. He could have lived in joys; countless hosts of angels were anxious to minister to him; but he preferred to suffer. "He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth." Verse 7.

2. *Great pains in his soul.* In the garden of Olivet he cried out: "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death." Mt. xxvi, 38.

And who can describe or imagine the anguish of his soul, when he exclaimed dying on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mt. xxvii, 46.

III.

FROM HIS DEATH.

Through love and friendship for men he died

1. *An ignominious death.* There was no death more ignominious than crucifixion. "He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree." Deut. xxi, 23. But "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii, 13. He died out of love for us this ignominious death, in the midst of two criminals.

2. *A painful death.* Behold him hanging between heaven and earth, forsaken by his Heavenly Father, his entire body one large wound, his soul sorrowful, around him his enemies who blasphemed and reviled him; at the foot of the Cross his sorrowful Mother, a sword piercing her heart, etc. "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Lam. i, 12.

3. *A prolonged death.* (*a*) His whole life was a continual succession of pains, sufferings, persecutions and dangers of death. He saw his death and all his torments before him at every moment of his life. (*b.*) On the Cross he was hanging three long hours. His life was, so to say, poured out with the drops of his sacred blood.

May the infinite charity of Jesus move us to heart-felt gratitude, unbounded confidence, and filial love toward God and men!

Menne.

Palm Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

On the eve of Palm Sunday Jesus had taken supper in the house of Simon the Leper at Bethania, where also Mary anointed his feet. The next morning Jesus went nigh to Bethphage a village situated at the foot of Mount Olivet. Bethphage being a sacerdotal town, it is supposed that the priests brought in from it the paschal lambs. The true Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, passes also through Bethphage on his way to Jerusalem.

The Gospel which relates the triumphal entry of our Jesus into Jerusalem, may be divided into three parts: In the first part we hear of the preparation made for the triumphal entry. In the second part we are reminded of the prophecy fulfilled on this glorious day. In the third part we are told of the triumph and glory amidst which Jesus makes his entry.

I.

THE PREPARATIONS.

Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them: "Go ye into the village, that is over against you: and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them to me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye: that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go."

1. Tradition mentions that these two disciples were Peter and John, whom Jesus sent also to prepare the Paschal lamb. As they were the representatives of heroic faith and charity, their selection teaches us that the most necessary virtues of messengers of Christ are a firm faith, and ardent love.

Jesus sends the Apostles to fetch two asses! He charges therewith the prince of his Church, and John, who shortly before had entreated him, through his mother, to sit at His right in

His kingdom. The Lord made this choice, in order to inculcate on Peter, and on all superiors, that whatever is committed to their care, is not to be regarded as unimportant; and on John and all those who long for honors in his Church, that true greatness does not consist in a preeminent position, but in the fulfillment of the duties of our calling, however insignificant they may appear.

2. Our Lord displays here also his prescience and omnipotence, as well as his supreme dominion. He sees remote things, as if they were near, and the hearts of men and their thoughts lie open before his eyes. He also controls the hearts of men, for "forthwith their owner will let them go."

"The Lord hath need of them," to-wit, the Messias, the Lord of all men, needs them for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. For whilst he, heretofore, traveled throughout Judea on foot, he now needs these animals to enter the metropolis of Judea triumphantly as the Messias, the son of David, and the king of the Jews. At the same time, he did not display royal pomp, as is exhibited by earthly potentates. The animal on which he rode, was an ass; his escort consisted of the poor and lowly, not of the great or noble; instead of sumptuous trappings, he availed himself of the garments of the poor. He showed that his kingdom was of a spiritual and heavenly order, by healing the lame and the blind on entering the temple, and by casting out the profane traffickers without the slightest resistance.

II.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY.

1. At the same time, Jesus was to show that the prophecy (Zach. ix, 9) concerned him and was fulfilled on this day, thus leaving the Jews no excuse for their incredulity and obstinate rejection of him. St. Chrysostom asks the Jews: "What other king ever entered Jerusalem, as our Lord did on this occasion, or who else fulfilled the prediction of the Prophet?"

The Prophet exhorts the daughter of Sion, i. e., the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the first place, and the spiritual Jerusalem,

the Holy Church, in the second place, to rejoice, because their king cometh, sitting upon an ass and a colt, that is, as it is to be explained according to the original text, an ass, viz.: (and) a colt. "Fear not," as St. John gives it, although you may have much reason to fear on account of your incredulity and blasphemies. Nevertheless repent of your sins, and fear not, because thy king cometh *meek*.

2. Whilst the prediction of the Prophet was once fulfilled in a literal sense by the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, it is spiritually fulfilled whenever our Saviour comes to us in the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar. There he comes to us, our King, God from God, the almighty Creator of the universe, the delight of Holy Angels. He comes to *me*, to a worm crawling in the dust.—He cometh *meek*. He has hidden his awful majesty under the species of bread; his sacred heart burning with love, he will not remember our iniquities.—He cometh as *Saviour* to save us from the tyranny of the devil; as physician to heal our wounded souls.

Rejoice therefore greatly, my soul, O daughter of heavenly Sion: shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King will come to thee to eat the Pasch with thee! Oh! prepare his way; lay off the garments of sensuality, and spread in his way the palm branches of good works, of faith, hope, and charity.

III.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

"And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded. And they brought the ass and the colt; and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon." The disciples laid their outer garments on both, the ass and the colt, in order to honor our Lord the more; and they made him sit on the garments laid on the colt, the other Evangelists informing us that he rode upon a colt "upon which no man sat," which was considered as an honor due to the Son of God.

If you ask me why also Jesus had the dam brought to him, although he only sat on the colt, I answer that we perceive in

this insignificant act the traces of his kind heart, as he would not treat unkindly even these animals, by separating without necessity those that had never been separated before.

2. "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way," etc.

The people who had come from all parts of the Holy Land, were enraptured with joy, and gave vent to the gladness of their hearts by acknowledging Jesus of Nazareth as their Messias, King and God. They cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of God: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." These words were taken from Ps. cxvii, 25, 26, and they evidently refer to the Messias; so that the multitudes, by using them, professed their belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messias. They also cried out: "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh." Mk. xi, 10. "Blessed is he who cometh king, in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory on high." Lk. xix, 38.

Let us imitate the multitude in professing publicly our faith in Jesus Christ as our God and Saviour; let us also imitate them in their love for Jesus, the delight of our hearts; and let us prepare for him a triumphal entrance under our roof in Holy Easter Communion. But let us abhor to follow them in their inconstancy. On this occasion they exclaimed "Hosanna!" Five days later they exclaimed "Crucify him." Now "Blessed is he that cometh;" on the following Friday "Away with him! Crucify him!" Now, he is addressed as King; a few days later they have no king but Cæsar. Now, he is met with palms and olive boughs; on Friday, He is crowned with thorns and laid on the tree of the cross. Now they spread their own garments in the way; on Friday, they ignominiously strip him of his own garments, and cast lots for them. Far be it from us to imitate this fickle multitude, by committing sin again, and crucifying Jesus anew, after he has made his triumphal entry into our souls in Holy Easter Communion.

VIII.

MATER DOLOROSA.

The Holy Church always commemorated the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin Mary together with the sufferings of her Divine Son. She has also devoted one station of the Way of the Cross to the remembrance of her sorrows. She represents there to our spiritual eyes the meeting of the Sorrowful Mother and her Divine Son on his way to Calvary. Let us direct our present meditation to this woeful meeting.

I.

THE DESIRE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN TO SEE HER SON IN HIS SUFFERINGS.

1. Let us admire the love of the Divine Mother who finds no rest until she sees her Divine Son, shrinking neither from the greatness of the sorrow, nor from the reviling that awaited her.

2. Let us imitate her in frequently meditating on the Sacred Passion of Jesus. We should also greatly desire to behold spiritually the sufferings of Jesus.

a. This is our duty, imposed on us (*a*) by reason of the great benefit, for which we owe heart-felt thanks. (*b*) By reason of the sanctity and dignity of the Being who suffers. (*c*) By reason of the great number of pains and afflictions.

b. It is our advantage. By frequent and devout meditation on the Sacred Passion of Christ, we conceive (*a*) a vivid abhorrence of sin. Heb. vi, 6. (*b*) A great zeal in performing good works, since Jesus, by his sufferings, renders the value of virtue palpable. (*c*) A tender love of Jesus. Love deserves return of love.

II.

THE GREAT SORROW OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1. He whom she met laden with the cross, was her only Son.

a. Where is the mother who would not suffer in her suffering child? And if this child is her only one, her grief is the more severe.

b. Jesus, the only beloved of her heart, is dearer to Mary than her own life.

2. Her Son was the Holy of holies.

a. Mothers are grieved at the pains which their sons have to undergo, even although they deserve them. How much more when they are innocent!

b. Jesus was the best of sons. Thirty years she had enjoyed his sweet presence. She adored him as the substantial sanctity.

3. He whom she saw suffer, was the Son of God.

a. The greater the dignity of the sufferer, the greater is the sorrow of those who are near and dear to him.

b. Mary knew the dignity of her Son more perfectly than all angels and men. She loved him not only with the love of a Saint, but also desired ardently that her Son might be known and adored by all creatures. And now she sees the Son of God despised and mocked at.—Besides she had the greatest abhorrence of all sin; and now she must witness the murder of her God.

4. Many were the cruelties committed against her Son.

a. Jesus was hustled to and fro, struck, spit in his face, despised and mocked at, etc.

b. Mary sees and hears all this. Indeed "great as the sea is thy destruction." Lam. ii, 13. "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see, if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." i, 12.

Let us have compassion on the Sorrowful Mother, and repent of our sins which have caused the deep grief of two innocent hearts.

III.

THE SUPERHUMAN PATIENCE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1. How she showed her patience.

a. Men generally complain when visited with great pains; and do not control their wrath when they are cruelly treated.

b. It is quite different with Mary. She does not complain, is not angry with the soldiers and executioners, but is silent, and suffers with resignation—a Mother worthy of such a Son!

2. Her patience springs forth from a treble root:

a. From her firm faith. She received, at the moment of her immaculate conception, the virtue of supernatural faith in full measure, in the light of which she saw in all events the divine decrees, and especially in the dire sufferings of her Son she saw an inscrutable mystery hidden in God, the source of infinite blessings.

b. From her strong hope, imparted to her also at the moment of her conception. In this hope she expected with confidence the redemption of the world by her Son, and the fulfillment of the promise: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father. And of his kingdom there shall be no end." Lk. i, 32.

c. From his ardent love which also was poured out into her soul from the first moment of her life. In consequence of this ardent love she gave herself entirely to the Heavenly Father, and even longed for sufferings, and would never offend her Son by the slightest impatience.

4. The means by which we obtain patience in our afflictions.

a. Make frequent acts of faith, hope, and charity.

b. Remember often the divine omnipotence, bounty, and love. Implore of God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, this virtue of patience.

Let us frequently meditate on this sorrowful meeting of Jesus and Mary, that, as a reward, we may receive the grace of seeing the kind and meek countenance of our Lord Jesus at the hour of our death.

Etzinger.

Easter Sunday.

VII.

HOMILY.

If all the festival days of the year invite spiritual joy, Easter Sunday is the most joyful day of all; so that the Holy Church, as if she were not able to find words for the joy of her heart, repeats again and again the Alleluja, which is inserted in all her prayers and hymns of this day. Easterday is distinguished from all other festival days, as St. Augustine remarks, as the Mother of God is distinguished from all other Saints. For it is the greatest of all festivals, and, as it were, the mother of them all. Let us then meditate on the cause of our joy, the resurrection of the Lord, as it is related by the Gospel of to-day; and, for this purpose, let us accompany the holy women on their way to the sepulchre, and, in the sepulchre, let us listen to the words of the holy angels.

I.

THE HOLY WOMEN ON THEIR WAY TO THE SEPULCHRE.

As to the holy women, we consider who they were, how great was their zeal, and how happy their reward.

1. These pious women were: *Mary Magdalen*, so celebrated in the Church of God by her penitent spirit, and by her tender affection for Jesus, to whom she remained faithful literally unto death, and after His death. *Mary the Mother of James*, who was the wife of Cleophas, a brother of St. Joseph foster-father of Jesus, supposed to be the same whom Jesus met on his way to Emmaus. She was also the mother of the Apostles James the Less, Thaddaeus and Simon. Her relation to Jesus was, therefore, not only a mere family connection, but a sincere communion of charity. *Salome*, the daughter of the latter, the wife of Zebedaeus, and mother of the Apostles James the Major, and John the Evangelist. How great veneration should we bear toward a family from which so many holy souls and zealous minis-

ters in the kingdom of God proceeded! St. Luke (xxiv, 10) mentions of "the other women that were with them". *Joanna*, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward (Lk. viii, 3), who was also one of those pious women who followed the Lord. These women are models to the *devout sex* for their pious zeal and for the ardent and intense love they manifested for our Blessed Redeemer. The Mother of God was, however, not with them, because she never doubted that her Divine Son would rise from death on that beautiful morning of the Lord's Day, and would appear to her first of all.

2. Of these pious women the Gospel says:

a. "They bought sweet spices." They gave us an example of *sacrificing love*. They possessed no precious spices for themselves, for their own use, wherefore they bought them for Jesus. But as it is for Jesus, they do not mind the expense; and, although they know that Joseph and Nicodemus had embalmed the Sacred Body, they will contribute their own share in honoring their Master.—We have the same Divine Lord in our midst, in the tabernacle: do we also, and especially the mothers and daughters of this congregation, love the beauty of the house of God, and the adornment of his altars? Or are there some amongst us who, like Judas, murmur at the "waste."

b. "That coming they might anoint Jesus." In this we see their faithful love reaching beyond the grave, and their great zeal. For "very early in the morning, the first day in the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen." Such is the ardor of divine love, to which the time passes too slowly, and which can hardly wait for the day on which they are invited to approach Jesus—a great contrast to our tardiness, since we are more anxious for all other things, than for the reception of the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ, and for the performance of pious and charitable works. We should hasten to the discharge of such holy duties especially on "the first day of the week." These pious women are your models, for they were the first in all Christendom to approach the Body of the Lord; and if you follow them, the first day of the week will be to you truly the *Lord's Day*, a day of a new creation, of spiritual resurrection, and of the descending of the Holy Ghost into your souls.

3. Their zeal is rewarded. When they started, they may, in their zeal, not have thought of the stone at the door of the sepulchre; but when they were on their way they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? They trusted, however, in God, that he would remove the difficulty in some way or other. And their confidence was not confounded. For "looking, they saw the stone rolled back: for it was very great." St. Matthew gives the explanation: "And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it." Thus God rewarded the zeal and perseverance of these pious women. Let us also do what is in our power, and God will remove all obstacles out of our way. "This angel is the grace of the Holy Ghost that rolls back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, strengthens our infirmity, smoothes all that is rough, and sweetens all bitterness by the balsam of his love." St. Anthony of Padua.

The women were the first to whom Jesus appeared, because they displayed a greater zeal than the Apostles. On this day women recovered the honor which they had lost through Eve, the first sinner. Would to God that all our women would do honor to their sex, so that, as far as depends on them, it might deserve of the name of the *devout sex*, and that all would promote the glory of God amongst their fathers, brothers and husbands.

II.

THE APPARITION OF THE HOLY ANGEL.

By whom the stone was rolled back we learn from St. Matthew (xxviii, 2): "And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it." It was therefore an angel who caused a great earthquake, in order to manifest the presence and power of God (Ps. lxxvii, 8, 9; ciii, 7), not for the purpose of opening the mouth of the sepulchre for our Redeemer. For, as the holy Fathers say, Jesus had already arisen, and had

come forth in virtue of the glorious gift of *subtilty*, without displacing the stone or breaking the seal, just as he had come forth from his mother's womb, or entered the chamber where his Apostles were assembled, after his resurrection, the doors being shut.

Concerning the angel, both the form in which he appeared, and the words he spoke, are very instructive.

1. The angel appeared as a *young man*, because in heaven there is no old age, but perpetual youth. The angels, although created six thousand years ago, enjoy the same vigor and beauty as on the first day of their creation, participating in the eternity of God. We all are to arise in youth on the day of Resurrection. We "shall be as the angels of God in heaven." Mt. xxii, 30.

The angel was clothed with a *white robe*, and as St. Matthew relates, his countenance was as lightning (xxviii, 3). The white robe of the angel symbolizes innocence and purity, without which we cannot enter heaven. "There shall not enter into it anything defiled." Apoc. xxi, 27. His countenance was as lightning for the purpose of terrifying the guards, and deterring them from throwing an obstacle in the way of the pious women. And so it came to pass: "For fear of him," writes St. Matthew, "the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men." (xxviii, 4.) Another reason for the angel appearing in this brilliant form, was, to exhibit the great joy of the angels at the resurrection of their Lord; and to remind us of the glory of the Saints in heaven.

2. The Angel said to the pious women, who feared on account of the heavenly apparition, and by reason of their humility, not deeming themselves worthy of so great a grace: "Be not affrighted." Indeed, all those who seek Jesus have no reason to be affrighted. Happy those souls who seek Jesus by penance, by detachment from the world, and by an humble life; happy those who follow him to the sepulchre, by dying to their sins and passions, and by carrying their cross after him! They will find Him who is risen, and not be affrighted, when the trumpet of the

angel will announce his coming to judge the living and the dead. But "those ought to tremble, and be affrighted because of the coming of the angel, who hate the coming of heavenly visitants. Leave fear to them who, oppressed by fleshly desires, have no hope ever to enjoy angelic society." St. Gregory the Great.

"Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him." I know for what object you came here. You seek him who humbled himself by choosing to spend the greater part of his life in Nazareth, that heretofore obscure town of Galilee; Him who was crucified for the salvation of men, and the glory of God. He is risen, thus furnishing the most undoubted ground for your faith. Come, and convince yourselves, and see the place where they laid him.—A sweet consolation for us also, "yet so if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." Rom. viii, 17.

"But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see him, as he told you." In Galilee Jesus had the most followers, and there his disciples would be the least subject to molestation. Mary Magdalen, a converted sinner, was the first to whom Jesus appeared; and Peter, the repentent sinner, is invited by name to come to Galilee with the other disciples. Hail to all those of you who, by a sincere Easter confession, are risen from sin; you afforded the sweetest joy to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Crucified, as Peter and Mary Magdalen did. And henceforth, following Peter and Mary after their conversion, sin no more.

VIII.

THE ALLELUJA OF VICTORY AND OF JOY.

All signs of sadness have disappeared from the house of God, and from the ceremonies of the Church, having been replaced by signs of joy. The Holy Church gives vent to her Easter joy in various ways, especially by her frequent repetitions of the exulting Alleluja. It is in a particular manner that the Allelujas after the *Ite Missa est* in Holy Mass, and after the *Benedicamus*

Domino at Vespers, strikes our ears and hearts. We may regard them in a two-fold light, as the Allelujas of victory, and as the Allelujas of joy.

I.

THE ALLELUJA OF VICTORY.

The disciples of Jesus were in deep sadness of heart; his enemies in their supposed triumph. Hell had apparently conquered, and death completed its sad victory. Yet, the word of the prophet had been fulfilled: "O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite." Osee xiii, 14. For "death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" I Cor. xv, 54.

Jesus conquered in his resurrection:

1. *Limbo and Satan.*

a. Limbo was the place of detention where all the just souls were ardently longing for the coming of the Redeemer. As soon as the soul of Jesus had "descended into hell," to the imprisoned souls, the gates which had been shut so many hundreds of years opened. "This is the generation of them that seek him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob. Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of Glory shall enter in." Ps. xxiii, 6, 7. Limbo became then a place of joy. "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Lk. xxiii, 43.

b. Satan, who had once conquered from the tree, was deprived of his prey, and cast again into hell. This was prefigured in man, who was executed on the very gibbet which he had erected for Mardochai.

2. *Death and the grave.* How glorious this victory was we may understand

a. From the certainty of his death, which resulted naturally from the collapse of his entire organism. The greater the destruction, the more wonderful the restoration.

b. From the power manifested in the resurrection. If it is the greatest of all miracles to call a dead man to life, the mir-

acle is far more stupendous, if the dead man himself works this miracle. Jesus himself pointed to this miracle as an indisputable evidence of his divinity. "Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up." John ii, 19. "A sign shall be given this evil and adulterous generation, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." Mt. xii, 38.

c. From the perfection of the victory. For the risen body of Jesus Christ was yet more perfect than the mortal one; and whilst other dead men, who were raised to life again, died a second time, death had lost all power over Jesus.

3. *All the enemies of truth:*

a. The infidelity and falsehood of his persecutors. They who did not deem all the miracles of Jesus a sufficient evidence of his divine mission, had to suffer the most ignominious defeat, since in his resurrection Jesus worked the most stupendous of all signs, and his name as the name of the conqueror of death was announced and preached throughout the whole world. Their injunction to the guard appointed to watch the sepulchre to testify that the body of Jesus was stolen, whilst they were sleeping, was an invention whose falsehood was so obvious on the face of it, as to afford in itself abundant confirmation of the truth of the resurrection, since no more plausible refutation of it could be made up.

b. The pusillanimity and doubts of the disciples. The fact of the resurrection dissipated their pusillanimity, a result which not all the previous miracles and doctrines of Jesus had been able to effect. Their doubts disappeared, as Jesus appeared to them frequently, convincing them of his resurrection by the testimony of their own senses.

The world was induced by the evidence of Christ's resurrection to accept his doctrine. As to us, it is

II.

THE ALLELUJA OF JOY.

Victory is ever the cause of joy, because evils are removed, and precious goods obtained. Now, the doctrine of the resur-

rection has rescued us from the night of infidelity, because on that truth is based the certainty of faith:

1. *In the divinity of Jesus Christ.*

a. If Christ was not risen, of what avail would be all the prophecies concerning the Son of God, the salutation and annunciation from Gabriel's lips, the testimony of John the Baptist, and all the assertions of Jesus?

b. By his resurrection he has sealed all this, so that, adoring, we exclaim with Thomas: "My Lord and my God!" Cf. Mt. xvi, 16. Col. ii, 19.

2. *In our redemption.*

a. Only a Godman could redeem us; for in order to make an infinite atonement, the atoning personage ought to be not only a passible man, but at the same time an infinite God.

b. That these conditions were verified in Jesus of Nazareth, is made evident by the resurrection. In his sufferings we witnessed the deepest humiliation of human nature—the resurrection manifests that these sufferings were of infinite merit. Hence the assertion of the Holy Ghost: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." I Cor. xv, 17.

3. *In our immortality*, which is so intimately connected with Christ's resurrection. Therein we possess the pledge

a. Of the immortality of our souls. "You see me, because I live, and you shall live." John xiv, 19. As the soul of Jesus was not touched by the hand of death, so "the souls of the just are in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them." Wisd. iii, 1.

b. Of the resurrection and transfiguration of our bodies. "He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit dwelling in you." "Who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory." Philip. iii, 21.

c. Of our reunion, not only with the deceased who were dear to us, but with all the glorified Saints, and with Christ him-

self. How great our joy is to be on that occasion you may learn from Job xix, 25, 26; Ps. xv, 19.

Finally, the resurrection of Christ is to us a certain pledge that the path to heaven pointed out by him is the true one. For the founder of the Christian religion has proved himself, by his glorification, to be the Son of God, wherefore all his doctrines, institutions, sacraments, and promises, rest upon the divine authority and veracity. Therefore let us sing "*Alleluja.*" "Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name," etc. Ps. civ, 1.

Hungari.

Low Sunday.

VII.
HOMILY.

The manifestation of Jesus after his resurrection, as it is recorded in to-day's Gospel, was his fifth appearance on the very day of resurrection, from which we infer the anxiety of the loving heart of Jesus to deliver his disciples from the bereavement and sadness of orphans. He had loved his own unto the end; and love inspired him, so to speak, with holy impatience to fulfill his promise of changing their sadness into joy!

The Gospel relates (1) the apparition of Jesus, when the doors were shut; (2) the institution of the Sacrament of penance; (3) the conversion of Thomas.

I.

JESUS APPEARS WHEN THE DOORS WERE SHUT.

1. "When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you." Jesus appeared within the room without opening the doors, as he had arisen from his grave before the stone was rolled back from the door of the sepulchre. What greatness and glory has God prepared for our bodies! They are to partake of the subtilty of the soul and to soar with her throughout the universe, knowing no obstacles.

"And he said to them: Peace be to you," by which words he conferred peace on them. "For he is our peace who hath made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmities of his flesh." Eph. ii, 14. Jesus has merited this peace with God, with angels, and with ourselves, by his Sacred Passion and Death.

2. "And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side." The disciples were astonished, "troubled and affrighted, and supposed that they saw a spirit." Thereupon Jesus showed them his hands and feet. And as they were yet hesitating in their belief, Jesus ate before them of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb. Then he explained to them the Scriptures, and said: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day. Such is the record of St. Luke xxiv, 36-46.

Jesus retained the marks of his glorious wounds (*a*) for his own glory. They are the signs of his obedience unto death, the signs of his perfect victory over hell and death, and the seals confirming his dominion over all creatures. (*b*) For our benefit, as a pledge of the peace restored between God and us, not unlike the rainbow (Gen. ix, 13); as a confirmation of our hope in the merits of Christ; as a perpetual voice imploring grace and mercy from the Father; and as an exhortation to love Jesus, and to hate sin. (*c*) He retains them, especially, for the Day of judgment, when the Elect will rejoice in their brilliant light, and "shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains" (Isai. xii, 3), whereas the reprobate, with trembling, shall look on him whom they pierced. John xix, 37.

The sacred wounds of our Lord were, in all ages, the object of the tenderest love and veneration of the faithful. May the wounded Saviour be present to our eyes also, in prosperity, that we may not trespass the limits of Christian decency; in grief, that we may preserve courage; in temptation, that we may not, by consenting to sin, tear open the wounds of Jesus anew.

II.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

1. Jesus said to his Apostles again: "Peace be to you."

The first time he wished them peace for themselves and, at the the same time, he imparted it to them, as, indeed, their subsequent joy manifested. The second time he imparts to them the peace of God as a common good to be conferred by them on all nations. Thus our Saviour transferred to the Apostles his own mission, to give peace to all mankind.

2. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." In these words our Redeemer declares, that the power with which he sends them, is equal to the power with which he was sent by the Father. At the same time he declares, that he sends them for the same purpose, as he was sent, to-wit, for the salvation of mankind, for which purpose he confers on them all necessary powers, above all the *power of forgiving sins.*

"When he had said this he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost." When God created man, he made him according to his image and likeness, by breathing into his face the breath of life. Gen. ii, 7. Now Jesus is to elevate the similarity of his Apostles with God to the highest degree, by conferring on them the divine power, and therefore he breathed on them. True, the Apostles had the Holy Ghost already, because they loved Jesus. But now they receive the Holy Ghost with the power of forgiving sins. He had also promised them to send the Paraclete after his ascension; by which he meant to say that he would send him with the plenitude of his gifts, not to the Apostles as such, but as members of the Holy Church. Besides he *sent* the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, whilst he now *gave* him to his Apostles. For the *sending* of the Holy Ghost implies his coming in a visible form.

Whilst the *breathing* was the visible sign of the sacrament, the words which Christ spoke, were the form. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." The Holy Fathers teach with one accord, that Jesus in these words instituted the sacrament of penance, by conferring on the Apostles and their successors the power of forgiving sins *in the name of God:* a power equal to that exercised in baptism.

3. The above power involves the necessity of confession. For Jesus Christ intended to have the above power exercised, for the edification of the Church, not arbitrarily and to the ruin of the faithful. But the only means of reaching this end, is special confession.

Praised be God, who called us into the fold of the Catholic Church, which alone possesses the divine power to reconcile the sinner with God, and to impart to the human heart peace in life and confidence in death.

Who would not willingly seize this second saving plank after a general shipwreck, and joyfully comply with the conditions required to obtain salvation? Let us, in word and deed, thank and glorify God, "who hath given such power to men." Mt. ix, 8.

III.

THE CONVERSION OF THOMAS.

1. Thomas was absent from the Apostolic College, it may be, because, being given to despondency, he sought distraction in the outer world. "One does not see Christ, if one is absent from the meeting of the Apostles, from the Church represented by them." St. Bernard.

2. He offended Jesus, because he trusted more to his own testimony than to that of all the other Apostles, whom he supposed to have been deceived. Therefore he was arrogant in laying down his own conditions of believing. Nevertheless Jesus, the good Shepherd, who goes after the one sheep, until he finds it, appears again to his disciples, when Thomas was with them. He probably took his hand, and put his finger into the place of the nails, and his hand into his side, where beat his sacred heart, saying to him: "Be not faithless but believing."

3. "Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God." In these words Thomas not only protested his belief, that He whom he saw before him was Jesus of Nazareth, but also his belief in the divinity of Jesus, who had proved by his resurrection that he was God. On account of this latter confession Jesus praises him, but he adds: "Blessed are they that have not

seen and have believed." This is "the conviction of things that appear not." We are, therefore, called blessed by our Lord himself for our faith which has for its foundation divine grace and spiritual motives.

4. By the concluding remark of St. John, that Jesus did many other signs which were not written, it is clearly said that the divine revelation is handed down by *oral tradition*, as well as by Scripture.

But whatever is written, is written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Without this faith no one can be saved.

VIII.

PANEGYRIC IN HONOR OF ST. GEORGE, MARTYR.

A youthful knight, mounted on horseback, with a strong arm thrusting his lance into the fiery jaws of a dragon—who is there who is not familiar with this picture of St. George? By the grace of the Lord he fought the good fight, and now the crown of justice shines on his brow. (II Tim. iv, 7.) It will be useful and edifying to meditate for a while on the combat of this hero of the faith. He fought the good fight in a treble arena.

I. *At the court of the emperor he conquered the world by his intrepid profession of faith.*

1. His enemy was the pagan world: a furious emperor, Diocletian, and a pagan senate which applauded the aim of the emperor to uproot Christianity. St. George appears in the midst of them—the only Christian.

2. St. George conquers this enemy.

a. As a preparation for the ensuing combat he distributes all his temporal possessions amongst the poor. "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple." Lk. xiv, 33. Those who entered the arena, in olden times, laid off all garments that might impede them in their wrestling.

b. By the weapon of an intrepid confession he fought and conquered. He was the only one who did not consent to the outrages against the Christian religion; he defended it against the emperor and his counselors; he confessed in the presence of all, that he himself was a disciple of Christ, and offered himself as the first victim of the persecution.

3. Are we also courageous in the profession of our faith? Do we not often lack courage to make an open profession of it by word and deed, in the society of infidels, and Protestants, and by the observance of the precepts of the Church? Is the Son of man to confess us before the Angels of God (Lk. xii, 8), or is he to be ashamed of us, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels? (Mk. viii, 38.)

4. In consequence of this open profession, he was subjected to a protracted course of torture, and finally beheaded. But an Angel of the Lord consoled him in his sufferings for Jesus Christ.

II. *In the temple of idols he conquered hell by producing the strongest evidence of the Christian faith.*

His wounds having been healed by a miracle, St. George presented himself again before the flattering tyrant; he was requested again to turn away from Christ to the gods of the empire. In reply, he expressed a wish to be led into the temple: this is the second scene of his combat.

1. There hell is the enemy he combats. The worship of idols, the fraud of the oracles, the immorality and cruelty of idolatry, are the devil's work.

2. The weapon of the Saint is the sacred name of Jesus, and the victorious sign of the Cross, in virtue of which the idols confessed their vanity, and then fell to the ground. How glorious a victory!

3. Let us also make use of these glorious weapons. "All temptations of the devil are frustrated, as soon as we set against him the sign of the Cross." St. Athanasius. "Whenever the devil excited me by his allurements I put him to flight by the sign of the Cross." St. Gregory Nazianzen. But he who employs superstitious means against certain evils, does he not cooperate with the devil?

III. *On the place of execution he conquered his own self by martyrdom.*

Laden with chains, St. George was led out of the temple, to the place of execution—the third scene of his combat and victory.

1. There he is called upon to combat against his own self. To die in the prime of life, a youth twenty years old, who had lived in honors and happiness—it was a fierce struggle.

2. In this terrible conflict he conquers by the weapon of prayer. He implores God for forgiveness of his sins, recommends his spirit into the hands of God, and accepts joyfully death by the sword. Now he triumphs in heaven crowned with victory.

3. How do we comport ourselves in our combat against our own selves? As Christians we are bound to deny ourselves, to take our cross upon our shoulders and follow Jesus on his way of the Cross. (Mt. xvi, 24.) Have we crucified our flesh, with the vices and concupiscences? Gal. v, 24. House and field, street and store, every place, wherever we may be, ought to be our arena, the place of execution of our passions.

Let us also fight the good fight, with the same weapons as those with which St. George fought his three enemies, who are also our enemies. If we, by the grace of God, are victorious, we shall obtain the same bright crown that adorns St. George; for it is laid up for all who love the coming of Christ. II Tim. iv, 8.

J. Kluespies.

Second Sunday After Easter.

VII.
HOMILY.

When the Jews had put out of the synagogue the man born blind to whom Jesus had given the sight of his eyes, our Saviour declares that he is the good Shepherd, the only cause of our salvation; so that he who seeks and finds the Saviour of the world, cannot be excluded from heaven by whomsoever.—The Holy Church, by having the Gospel on the Good Shepherd read during Easter exhorts us to follow Jesus as our pastor and guide, if we desire to participate of the Easter joys in heaven. Our Good Shepherd said:

1. "I am the good shepherd." God had foretold by the prophets, that the Messias would come as a shepherd in the midst of his sheep, to protect and feed them, with power and charity alike. "I will set up one Shepherd over them, my sheep: and he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God: and my servant David the prince in the midst of them: I the Lord have spoken it." Ezech. xxxiv, 11, etc. Cf. Isai. xl, 11. Jerem. xxiii, 5. I am, says Jesus, the Good Shepherd for whose coming the nations are waiting, and whom the prophets have foretold, the Messias. Therefore you have no right to persecute anyone for his belief in me; on the contrary, you should fear and tremble, because you are those impious shepherds of whom Ezechiel speaks xxxiv, 2-10.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. For

a. He is the proprietor of all mankind, by creation, and especially by redemption. "Know you not, that you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price." I Cor. vi, 19. "With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 19. Jesus loves the sheep because they are his own.

b. This love of Jesus for his sheep is unbounded, and unselfish. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.

"Greater love than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13. Jesus laid down his life for his enemies. After a toilsome life of thirty-three years, spent for the love of his sheep, he gave his life itself for them, and still sacrifices himself upon our altars, and gives himself as food in the Holy Eucharist. All this he did for the welfare of his sheep. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." John x, 10.

2. All those to whose care Christ's sheep are committed should follow the Good Shepherd in *making the sacrifice of their lives* for his sheep

a. By devoting their time and faculties to the welfare of the souls under their protection. "Receive not the grace of God in vain." II Cor. vi, 1.

b. They should be instigated by the same motives, as Jesus was, by the love of God and ardent zeal for his honor. Evidences of the love of God are meekness, patience, prudence, active compassion.

c. The Lord demands of his ministers even to lay down their lives whenever the salvation of souls requires it. Therefore they assist the sick and dying in time of pestilence, and go to the heathen to carry to them the good evangelical tidings, ever ready to lay down their lives in order to gain souls for Christ. Here we have also one of the motives of celibacy.

Oh! that all parents would thus faithfully fulfill the mission confided to them; and that all Christians would pray for good shepherds to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ. May not one be a hireling, of whom our Lord says:

"But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth because he is a hireling; and he hath no care for the sheep." Hirelings are those ministers, and parents and superiors, who connive at the sins of those committed to their care, and are negligent in keeping the infernal wolf from them.

3. A good shepherd should also possess *pastoral wisdom.* Jesus possessed this wisdom perfectly. "I know mine, and mine know me," etc. Jesus knows his sheep thoroughly; he knows how to supply all their needs, and to protect them. "Mine know me," they think of me frequently and love me from the bottom of their hearts. This is a mutual relation between Jesus and his flock, so intimate and holy, that it can be compared only to the relation between Father and Son. As I have, says Jesus, whatever I have, from the Father, and therefore love the Father, so mine have all whatsoever they have, from me, and love me.

Finally our Lord declares that he is to call also the nations through the Apostles into the unity of his Church. His doctrine is to break down the wall of partition separating the Jews and the Pagans. Jews and Gentiles are to be one fold under one shepherd.

VIII.

ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES OUR GUIDES TO HEAVEN.

Although Jesus is the Good Shepherd, yet there are other shepherds, who became good by following his example, and by being strengthened by his grace. The most prominent of these followers of Christ are the holy Apostles who went out into the world, to gather the lost sheep, and lead them to heaven. These holy men continue still their mission by their example in all virtues. I propose to offer to your attention and veneration two of the holy Apostles—St. Philip and St. James—whose day occurs at this time, and to indicate especially wherein they are to us reliable guides to heaven.

I.

ST. PHILIP IS OUR GUIDE BY HIS THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

A wayfarer who knows the way leading to his own country, must march forward if he wishes to reach his aim. St. Philip marched zealously forward on the way leading to heaven. He is especially a model to us

1. In his vivid faith.

Faith is necessary for salvation. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me." John xiv, 6. Philip possessed this faith. When Jesus was on his way to Galilee he met Philip, and said to him: "Follow me." John i, 43. "No sooner had he heard the word, than he believed." St. Chrysostom. He sealed his faith by the death on the cross.

2. In his firm hope.

He sealed his hope by martyrdom.

3. In his ardent love.

In his zeal and charity he sought to win Nathanael also, saying: "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth; and when Nathanael in wonder asked, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" Philip simply answered: "Come and see." So great was his love for Jesus, that he thought, to see him is to love him. He also led Gentiles to Jesus. In the fervor of his thirst for God he exclaimed: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough."

Those who love sincerely God and their fellowmen, find easily the way to heaven. All their thoughts, words, and works are meritorious, and they anticipate, whilst on earth, their constant occupation in heaven.

II.

ST. JAMES BY HIS APOSTOLIC LIFE.

A wayfarer must not mind the roughness of the way, if it only lead him to his destiny. So it is with the way leading to heaven. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 18. St. James went this rough way to heaven.

We admire in him

1. *His austere mortification.* The earliest of Church historians, Hegesippus, says of him: He drank no wine, wore no sandals on his feet, and but a single garment on his body. He prostrated himself so much in prayer that the skin of his knees was hardened like a camel's hoof. The Jews used out of respect to touch the hem of his garment.

We are also exhorted: "Mortify your members." Col. iii, 5. But alas! "many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly." Philip. iii, 18.

2. *His celestial wisdom.* "On James the just, on St. John, and on St. Peter, the Lord, after his resurrection, conferred a special knowledge, which they imparted to the other Apostles." St. Clem. Alex. His wisdom was also generally acknowledged at the Apostolic council held in Jerusalem.

God demands of us to manifest our wisdom by following the doctrines of the Church, so that we may have reason to say: "We are fools for Christ's sake." I Cor. iv, 10.

3. *His conspicuous sanctity.* Sanctity is, so to speak, the summit of divine perfection, and the higher degree of sanctity attained by man, the more perfectly the image and likeness of God engraved in his soul. St. James attained an unusual degree of sanctity. "I will see the pious James who is said most to resemble Jesus in his person and life." St. Ignatius, the Martyr. Even the Jews held his purity, mortification and prayers, in such high veneration that they named him *the Just.* "He was always a virgin," says Hegesippus, "and consecrated to God."

Only those are permitted to enter the Celestial Sion who at least strive for sanctity. Oh that we would follow the two holy Apostles, Philip and James, in their sanctity! The life of the just and their good works lead to where they rejoice for all eternity.

P. Timotheus a Sancto Ignatio.

Third Sunday After Easter.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel of this day is a part of our Saviour's last discourse to his disciples, which the Holy Church has selected for this and the following Sundays before Pentecost. For this last discourse has been addressed to us as well as to the Apostles, that we may be strengthened and consoled in our many tribulations, and that we may cherish an ardent desire for heaven, and longing for outpouring within us of the Holy Ghost. The tenor of to-day's Gospel is as follows.

I. *Jesus foretells his going to the Father, and his return.*

1. He prepares his disciples for this parting hour. "A little while, and now you shall not see me." He consoles them by the promise: "And again a little while, and you shall see me." And in order that their minds may not be too much attached to his bodily presence, but rather soar with him toward heaven, he says to them: "I go to the Father."

2. God acts still daily in the same manner with his Elect; for (*a*) tribulation and consolation alternate continually; (*b*) God's intention is to preserve us from vain self-exaltation in prosperity, and from despondency in distress. (*c*) Let our conduct correspond with this divine intention. Let us not be without fear in prosperity ("Blessed is the man that is always fearful," Prov. xxviii, 14), nor without hope in distress. "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded." Ecclus. ii, 11.

II. *The disciples did not understand the words of Christ.*

1. Why is it that they did not understand them?

Because they would not believe, that He whom they believed to be the Son of God would be taken away from them by a cruel death. Therefore they thought that the reiterated prophecy of His passion was not to be interpreted in a literal sense,

but that is was a mystery, although they did not understand the precise nature of it. For they regarded such a self-abasement of their Master as unbecoming. "Lord, be it far from thee; this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. xvi, 22), said Peter; and Jesus called him Satan, adversary, because he acted against the Divine Will.

2. Those act like Peter who consider those who are visited with suffering and persecution as forsaken of God, but those with whom things prosper as God's friends.

III. *Jesus foretells his disciples what is awaiting them.*

"Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep."

1. The disciples wept because of his death, but soon rejoiced at his resurrection.

2. We must also lament and weep (*a*) on account of our sins; (*b*) because we are exiles. "Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered Sion." Ps. cxxxvi, 1. (*c*) We should pray from time to time for the gift of tears. (*d*) Then our sadness will be changed into joy in heaven, whilst the children of the world who now rejoice, will then lament and weep. Lk. vi, 25.

IV. Finally, our Lord explains his words by the *similitude of a woman* who is in labor. It teaches us:

1. That our sadness will soon be changed into joy; and as this is more lasting than our sadness, we shall soon forget what we have suffered. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come."

2. That sufferings are the necessary condition of obtaining these joys.

"So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." We also shall rejoice after the general resurrection, when we are to behold God face to face; and our joy no man shall take from us.

VIII.

(*Patronage of St. Joseph.*)

FAMILIAR CONVERSATION OF ST. JOSEPH WITH JESUS.

The Holy Scriptures relate very little regarding the life of St. Joseph; yet even this little is full of edification, and is calculated to foster within our souls a desire to imitate his virtues. Being the foster-father of Jesus, he enjoyed an uninterrupted familiar intercourse with the Son of God committed to his care. This intercourse was, on the part of St. Joseph, that *of an Angel with his God:* herein we should imitate him.

I.

ST. JOSEPH WAS CHARGED WITH THE MINISTRY OF AN ANGEL WITH REGARD TO JESUS.

A. Perpetual vision of God, constant adoration and glorification of God is the first occupation of Angels. "Their Angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." Mt. xviii, 10.

1. St. Joseph performed this angelic occupation far more perfectly.

a. He constantly adored Jesus, from the hour when he adored Him as a child in the Manger, until that last hour, when he commended his spirit into the hands of Him in whose embrace he died—without seeing, as the Angels, the divine glory and majesty. Wondrous faith.

b. He sacrificed his own self entirely to this Divine Child; for him only he lived, worked and suffered. Wondrous love!

c. He adores as his supreme Lord Him whom he nourishes and clothes. What homage!

d. He expects his eternal beatitude from Him who had not where to lay his head. What confidence!

2. As a similar opportunity is proffered to us, and a similar duty is imposed on us, let us imitate the example of St. Joseph.

a. Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament demands of us the same faith, the same love and homage, the same confidence, the same continual intercourse with him. Have we, heretofore, complied with this demand of the Lord?

b. Our daily work should not prevent us from it, no more than it prevented St. Joseph; who had his hand at his work, but his heart with his own Jesus. Vivid faith in the presence of God would deter us from sin, and adorn us with all virtues.

B. The second occupation of holy Angels is to protect men. "He hath given his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Ps. xc, 11. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for these, who shall receive inheritance of salvation?" Heb. i, 14.

1. Far more exalted was the ministry of St. Joseph, who ministered not to men, but to the Son of God himself,—in the stable at Bethlehem, on the flight into Egypt, on the return; and in the house at Nazareth, so that it is literally true of St. Joseph, that in his hands he bore up the Son of God.

2. In the most blessed sacrament of the Altar, Jesus gives himself to us; what is it that we do, sacrifice, suffer, in order to keep him with us, to honor, serve, and glorify him?

II.

ST. JOSEPH IN HIS CONVERSING WITH JESUS, DISPLAYED THE VIRTUES OF AN ANGEL.

The Angels are

1. *Pure beings* who know of no passions.

a. St. Joseph, the virginal bridegroom of the virginal Mother of God, was of admirable purity; so that in Mary's and Joseph's presence the Lamb of God was feeding among the lilies. Cant. ii, 16.

b. We are also obliged to love and foster purity: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." Mt. v, 8.

"They sung it as it were a new canticle. They are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Apoc. xiv, 3. Purity is the sublimest of virtues; for "no price is worthy of a continent soul." Ecclus. xxvi, 20.

2. *Faithful.*

a. St. Joseph proved his faithfulness toward Jesus in this, that he never forsook Him, even under the most painful circumstances; and, especially, that he sought the lost Jesus three days and nights sorrowing.

b. How do we prove our faithfulness toward Jesus? Every sin is a perfidy; every mortal sin is a defection from God. Yet how many are the mortal sins which we have committed; and how long have we been in this unhappy state?

3. *Prudent.*

a. St. Joseph was prudent in fulfilling his duties. He showed this, when he, in order to save Mary's good name, was minded to put her away privately (Mt. i, 19); and when, returning from Egpyt, he went, not to Jerusalem, but to Nazareth, although the Angel did not tell him where he should go. Mt. ii, 22.

b. Oh! that we possessed a similar prudence! Through lack of prudence we plunge ourselves into danger of losing Jesus, and are prevented from seeking him where he can be easily found —in church. Through lack of prudence we are prevented from breaking with the world, and from breaking the chains of our passions.

4. *Powerful.*

a. Great is the power of St. Joseph:

On earth, where he had the name of the father of Jesus Christ. God the Father himself made him share this name with Him. "My name is in him." Exod. xxiii, 21. His contemporaries honored him with this name. (Lk. iii, 23.) So did the Blessed Virgin herself: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Lk. ii, 48. Jesus obeyed him as a father. "He was subject to them." Lk. ii, 51.

In heaven. His intercession, says St. Thomas Aquinas, may

obtain for us help, not in one only, but in every concern. "Oh! that I were a priest! I should wander throughout the world and entreat Christians to venerate more St. Joseph. Whatever I have asked through his intercession, has been granted to me." St. Teresa.

b. Let us therefore invoke with confidence our Patriarch St. Joseph. "Go to Joseph." Gen. xli, 55.

Let us venerate and love St. Joseph as our father; let us follow his example in conversing with Jesus: let us remain in the society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; then we shall die in their arms, and be accompanied by them into heaven.

G. Patiss.

Fourth Sunday After Easter.

VII.
HOMILY.

When the Lord said to his disciples, that he was to leave this world, none of them asked, "Whither goest thou?" The unhappy sinner should put to himself the same question with wholesome sadness. But sinners are only intent upon pleasure, and do not see, in their blindness, that they are on the way that leads to their temporal and eternal ruin. For

I.

THE WAYS OF THE SINNER ARE FALLACIOUS IN THEIR BEGINNING.

With good reason sin is symbolized by the Sodom's fruit, which is very attractive in its outward appearance, but contains only ashes and rottenness. You sin to find pleasure, but find only disgust. Recognize the deception:

1. *Remember the first sin.*

a. What did Eve see? She saw that the tree was fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold. Gen. iii, 6. Why is it that she did not observe this before? Because Satan had blinded her. Oh! that she had been satisfied with *looking* only at the tree!

b. She thought, that this which had the appearance of being good was good indeed, "that it was good to eat." Such is the delusion at the beginning of sin, of which God himself had said, that it will cause death.

2. *Take the example of every sinner.* He exclaims: "Let us enjoy the good things that are present" (Wisd. ii, 6), but he is deceived by two delusions:

a. He takes that which is evil for good, sin, the only evil for mankind, the evil that has brought and still brings all tribulations upon earth, and deprives men of all blessings, of divine complacency and grace, and the right of divine inheritance.

b. He takes that which is good for an evil, whenever he discovers in others something good. To him the contempt of the world appears as melancholy, mortification as folly. Hence the many revilings and mockeries with which he persecutes the pious.

3. *Open your eyes.* For "the way of the wicked is darksome; they know not where they fall." Prov. iv, 19. The blind sinner is like to that man in the Apocalypse, who deemed himself wealthy, but indeed was wretched, poor, blind and naked. The Spirit of God counselled him to anoint his eyes with eye-salve, that he might see. Apoc. iii, 18. This eye-salve is the heavenly light, and the meditation on eternal truths.

II.

THE WAYS OF THE SINNER ARE ROUGH.

In vain do sinners boast of leading a happy life; God's word contradicts them. "Destruction and unhappiness in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known." Ps. xiii, 3. Although sin should appear sweet in its beginning, much bitterness will succeed, to-wit,

1. *The natural consequences of sin.* Let not the outer appearance deceive you. "You see only the joy; but look also at the hidden ulcer." St. Ambrose. For sin

a. Comprises many evils. Are not the avaricious, the envious, the wrathful, drunkards, etc., really unhappy in their condition? The words of St. Ambrose apply to every sinner: His own heat scorches him."

b. Produces many evils. Ambition produces envy, offence, revenge; impurity causes many diseases, so that the sinners will one day avow themselves: "We have walked through hard ways." Wisd. v, 7.

2. *The pangs of conscience.* If sin were really exceedingly sweet, its sweetness would always be embittered by an inner hell. "The guilty conscience is, as it were, a hell and a prison of the soul." St. Bernard. "The sorrows of death surrounded me." Ps. xvii, 5. The evil conscience is a torment of hell, not only because we have it in common with the condemned, but also on account of inner similarity. It is a torment

a. Without remedy. For as long as the sinner remains a sinner, he cannot escape the reproaches of his conscience, no more than the condemned can be delivered out of hell.

b. Without consolation. Of what avail are all pleasures if the gnawing worm torments you?

c. Without interruption, at any time, in every place. As Satan is tormented by the pains of hell, although he goes about in the midst of men, so the sinner carries about his inner tormenter.

Oh! let us not long for the false happiness of the sinner, but let us bear the sweet yoke and burden of virtue. "Conduct me, O Lord, in thy way." Ps. lxxxv, 11.

III.

THE WAYS OF THE SINNER LEAD TO RUIN IN THEIR END.

Why should we envy sinners their worldly prosperity? "The way of sinners is made plain with stones: and in their end is hell and darkness, and pains." Ecclus. xxi, 11. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell." Job. xxi, 13. With the certainty of this eventual ruin before them, they show forth:

1. *The greatest folly.*

a. The heathens used to wreath the animals to be immolated, and to lead them to the slaughter under great pomp. If these animals had known what was to be done with them, they would have made all possible resistance.

b. The sinner knows what torment is awaiting him, but "he hath been compared to senseless beasts and made like to them." Ps. xlviii, 21. He says: "Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered." Wisd. ii, 8. "Let us eat and drink: for to-morrow we shall die." Isai. xxii, 13.

2. *The most lamentable carelessness.*

Although the ministers of the Gospel remind sinners again and again of their final perdition, most of these think that they themselves will form an exception to the rule, and will never acknowledge how much reason everyone has to tremble. For

a. *Many will perish.* Not only notorious criminals, revilers at the sanctuary, etc. Remember that our Lord speaks of a wide gate and a broad way that leadeth to destruction, by which many enter; and of a narrow gate and a strait way which leadeth to life, found by few only. Mt. vii, 13, 14.

b. *Every mortal sin deserves hell.* "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die." Ezech. xviii, 20. And you dare to remain in the state of sin and to play with the everlasting fire? You dare to commence your sinful life anew after every confession, as though you were sorry, not to have sinned, but to have confessed?

3. They will fall victims to obduracy, which is the natural consequence of a sinful life, for these reasons:

a. The more you sin, the more you separate yourselves from God; the more power over yourselves you concede to the devil, the more all the faculties of your soul become habituated to sin.

b. God is less liberal in distributing his graces, so that, at last, conversion is made impossible, because the farther you are from God, the greater graces are needed for your return.

"Know thou, and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God." Jerem. ii, 19. We have considered how fallacious, bitter, and destructive are the ways of the sinner. Let us, therefore, have our attention continually directed to the two eternities, that we may shun the way of the sinner, and walk the path of virtue.

Bordoni.

VIII.

(*St. Isidore, a Farmer.*)
THE PICTURE OF ST. ISIDORE.

In every honest state of life men are able to become Saints. You find in your almanac holy kings, subjects, citizens, soldiers, shepherds and laborers, married people and virgins. Our own experience teaches us that bright virtues shine sometimes in palaces, and sometimes in hovels. The Holy Church commemorates, in these days, a Saint who tilled the soil, and, on this account, is held in great veneration by the farming community. Let us, for our edification and instruction, meditate awhile on his picture. In it St. Isidore is represented:

I. His hands lifted up toward heaven.

II. At his feet a spade.

III. At his side holy Angels managing the plough.

I.

THE HANDS LIFTED UP TOWARD HEAVEN.

This denotes

1. In general the celestial spirit.

a. The earth is not our home. Our home is above the stars, "that Jerusalem, which is above, is free; which is our mother." Gal. iv, 26. Therefore the desire of our hearts should be directed toward heaven. "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." Col. iii, 2. This desire for heaven is intimated in the picture of St. Isidore, by his joined hands. They are directed heavenward; and as his hands, so his heart. Isidore sought God in all things, devoting to him all his thoughts and offering up to him all his words and deeds.

b. What do we seek? Heaven or earth; everlasting or perishable things; the Creator or the creature? Are we of the number of those of whom St. Paul complains that they "mind earthly things"? Philip. iii, 19. Oh! let us use this world, as if we used it not: for the figure of this world passeth away. I Cor. vii, 31.

2. Especially devout prayer.

a. Prayer is the nourishment of the soul; it is the dew from heaven. "As wax, when exposed to the rays of the sun, becomes white, so the soul, who in prayer approaches the sun of divine justice, increases in sanctity and purity." Louis of Granada. St. Isidore was a man of prayer.

b. Let us treasure the word of the Lord: "Watch ye and pray" (Mk. xiii, 33), and the exhortation of the Apostle: "Be instant in prayer." Col. iv, 2. Many say: "I find no time for prayer." St. Isidore was also a hard-working man; still he found time for prayer. If you be of good will you will easily find some time for your morning and evening prayer. Besides, when at work, remember the divine presence, and renew frequently your good intentions. "Do all things for the glory of God." I Cor. x, 31.

II.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPADE AT HIS FEET.

It signifies

1. The toilsome way of making a livelihood.

a. "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth." Gen. iii, 17. St. Isidore toiled hard, not for himself, but in the service of another.

b. Have you not often complained of your hard work? Remember, God himself placed the spade in your hands; and we cannot but bear the burden of the day and the heat, until the great day of rest approaches. God did not lead his Saints a different way to heaven. Therefore let us cheerfully work for the glory of God.

2. Pious industry.

a. Our daily labor, when done with resignation to God's holy will, and with holy love, is meritorious for heaven. "Labor is well paid for; we earn by it the glory of eternity." St. Jerome.

St. Isidore gained heaven by his industry. He worked with a good intention,—for the love of God; and with great diligence, —as in the presence of God.

b. On examining our conscience, we find that many of our works will bring no fruit for heaven, because only selfishness prompted us to perform them; they were not sanctified by having our spiritual eyes turned toward heaven. Let it be otherwise for the future. "Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance." Col. iii, 23.

III.

THE HOLY ANGELS ENGAGED IN PLOUGHING.

They remind us

1. *Of the blessing of heaven.*

Isidore's master saw frequently holy angels ploughing at his side. Where angelic hands labor, the divine blessing is sure to come. Prosperity increased manifestly under the management of the Saint, so that he could say to his master in the words of Jacob once spoken to Laban: "Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how great thy possession hath been in my hands. Thou hadst but little before I came to thee, and now thou art become rich: and the Lord hath blessed thee at my coming." Gen. xxx, 29.

b. God is anxious to bless you, too, if you place no obstacle in his way. God does not send his angels into the houses of the quarrelsome, covetous, unchaste, etc. We read: "The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, he shall receive a blessing from the Lord." Ps. xxiii, 4. "Want is from the Lord in the house of the wicked: but the habitations of the just shall be blessed." Prov. iii, 33. Banish therefore sin and vice out of your house, and keep the divine commandments, and the precepts of the Church.

2. *Of the intercourse of holy Angels with men.*

a. This truth is contained in the Christian faith. "He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy

ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up; lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Ps. xc, 11. Holy Scripture records many instances of this loving intercourse of the holy Angels with men.

b. How great a consolation! Angels surround us, Angels protect us, Angels assist us at our daily work. "They are faithful, wise, mighty. Why should we tremble? Therefore let us follow them, and attach ourselves to them!" St. Bernard. In a special manner let us venerate our Guardian Angel, and, through his intercession, we shall obtain the abundance of heavenly blessing.

J. Schuen.

Fifth Sunday After Easter.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel for this Sunday records a promise full of consolation to all disciples of the Lord: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you;" a promise the more valuable, because given by Jesus when he was about to leave this world.

1. In the above words Jesus proclaimed prayer as an infallible means of grace, as well as the holy sacraments. With the same certainty with which these produce their effects, if we put no obstacle to their efficacy, prayer also obtains graces for us. For the same God who said, "This is my body," said also: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you." It is therefore a beautiful, as well as a true, remark of St. Chrysostom, that as man was born naked and helpless, but by his hand, the *organum organorum*, was enabled to procure the necessities of life, so he was not able, by his own power, to think or do that which is acceptable to God, but by prayer as a universal means of grace was enabled to open heaven, and obtain from

God whatever was necessary for his spiritual life. Being in possession of this universal means of grace, we can never find an excuse, when we succumb to a temptation.

Indeed, all sin and vice spring forth from the omission of prayer, and all sanctity from zeal of prayer; so that St. Alphonse of Liguori does not hesitate to assert that all the inhabitants of hell were cast into that place of horror, because they did not pray, whilst the citizens of heaven enjoy the vision of God, because they did pray. Consequently, the greatest misfortune that can befall man, is not so much to sin as to cease praying. For if he does not pray, he will surely fall into sins, will not become converted, but die in his sins. Hence the greatest blessing on earth is to be zealous in prayer.

2. The above promise is, however, connected with our prayer only if we pray *in the name of Jesus*, that is, if we expect through the name of Jesus Christ to have our petition granted; so that we say to the Father, if not in words, at least with our heart: "I am not worthy to be heard; but behold thy only-begotten Son who prays for me and with me, and for his sake and love hear my humble prayer."

With a heart in the service of sin we cannot pray in the name of Jesus who died to extirpate sin. Nor can we pray in the name of Jesus if the object of our petition is not in conformity with the divine will.

3. "Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name," etc. You have not known the power of my name; and when you had a petition, it was of such a nature as to be valueless; but henceforth when you pray, ask *something*, i. e., something that is worth while to pray for; ask for the possession of heaven, for perfect joy. God is great, and great things he desires to give to us.

4. "These things I have spoken to you in proverbs," etc. The disciples had either not understood at all, or not perfectly, the words of Jesus, so that they were to them as parables, as proverbs. But on the day of Pentecost Jesus will enlighten them through the Holy Ghost. On that day their faith will be

so strengthened, and their love so enkindled, that their Father will regard them as if they were one with his only-begotten Son.

Thereupon the Apostles protested their faith in the divinity of their Master, because he knew their thoughts and doubts before they expressed them in words.

VIII.

(St. Anthony of Padua, Confessor.)

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA IN THE LUSTRE OF VIRTUES AND MIRACLES.

When, on the thirteenth day of June, A.-D. 1231, the voices of children were heard crying along the streets of Padua, "Our father, St. Anthony, is dead," the Lord thus perfecting him praise out of the mouth of infants (Ps. viii, 3), it must be recognized as evidence of the virtue and sanctity of his life; and if before the lapse of one year Pope Gregory IX. inscribed him among the Saints of God, it must be regarded as an evidence of many miracles having been performed by the Saint in his lifetime, and through his intercession after his death. Therefore St. Anthony shines in the Church of God in a double lustre of virtues and miracles. "Miracles rejoice, virtues edify" (St. Bernard); therefore I invite you on this day to meditate on the virtues of St. Anthony for your edification, and to admire the miracles of the Saint for the delight of your heart.

I.

THE VIRTUES OF ST. ANTHONY.

1. The virtues of St. Anthony had their origin in the love of God which was burning in his heart. Divine love is the root from which all other virtues spring forth; the queen around which the others are gathered. "Nothing is stronger, nothing is greater than love. Generous love to Jesus urges us to perform great deeds." Imit. Chr. This divine love urged St. Anthony

a. To detach himself perfectly from the world. At the age of fifteen he joined the canons regular of St. Vincent near Lisbon, esteeming all things to be but loss, and counting them but as dung, that he might gain Christ. (Philip. iii, 8.) And, then, in order not to be diverted by his relations from the exercise of virtue, and from applying himself to science, he chose the more remote cloister of the Holy Cross at Coimbra.

b. To long ardently for a martyr's death, having been stirred by the spirit and example of the five Franciscan martyrs, whose sacred bodies were entombed in the vaults of the cloister at Coimbra, eight years after St. Anthony had entered there. Therefore he joined the order of the Franciscans, sailed for Africa to earn a martyr's palm, but falling sick, was bidden to return.

c. To follow Jesus to perfection. For this mind was in him, which was also in Christ Jesus, who debased himself, taking the form of a servant. Philip. ii, 5. He concealed his virtue and science with such dexterity, that, at the general chapter held at Assisi, he remained unnoticed, and one of the provincials sent him to a remote convent to say there holy Mass for the lay-brothers, as he was regarded unable to serve the community in any other way. During nine months he performed there the humblest services, prayed and meditated in the solitude of a grotto, chastising his own body.

d. To manifest the most ardent zeal in preaching the word of God. After the lapse of nine months, St. Anthony, when bidden to preach to the religious assembled at Forli, stood revealed in all his sanctity, learning, and eloquence before his rapt and astonished brethren. From this time he was continually preaching the word of God, and for nine years, France, Italy, and Sicily heard his voice, saw his miracles, and men's hearts turned to God. When he once preached in Rome before Gregory IX. this Pope called him "the Ark of both Testaments."

e. To foster a filial love and veneration for the virginal Mother of God. He was constant in invoking her intercession, especially in time of sickness. At the very hour of death he

sung a hymn in her honor, and died in a cloister devoted to her, in one of the suburbs of Padua. He took great pains to imitate her in her virginal purity and innocence of life; for which reason we see him represented by sacred art as holding a lily in his hand.

f. To work for the love of his fellowmen. For the benefit of his brethren, he strove to keep up the regular discipline, in spite of all opposition and threatenings. He protected, at the peril of his own life, the city of Padua against the fury and tyranny of Ezzelino. His public life was an uninterrupted labor for the salvation of souls.

2. Let us endeavor to imitate St. Anthony, especially in his love to God, which is also poured out into our hearts. Therefore the Apostle exhorts us: "Above all things, have charitv, which is the bond of perfection" (Col, iii, 14), and "keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21):

a. By being solicitous in preserving your innocence, and in increasing in grace. "The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward, and increaseth even to perfect day." Prov. iv,18. Let those who are yet innocent walk carefully, and those whose duty requires it, guard innocence!

b. By a sincere conversion to God. As the sun, after a thunderstorm, sheds a mild light over the country, so the sun of divine love pours, after true conversion, the mild rays of grace into the repentant heart, and there will be joy both in heaven and on earth, since there is no one on earth who is so bereft of friends as not to have one soul who will rejoice at his conversion.

II.

THE MIRACLES OF ST. ANTHONY.

1. Miracles create spiritual joy.

a. They are seals and evidences of the truth of our holy religion; they are manifestations of the divine power and majesty. Therefore God has endowed his messengers in the Old as well as in the New Testaments with the power of working miracles.

b. Every one must rejoice at the miracles, to whom God and his holy faith, its light and truth, its consolation and joy in this earthly life, are not indifferent things.

2. The miracles of St. Anthony particularly rejoice our hearts:

a. Miracles connected with his preaching.

His preaching itself was a miracle and attended by countless miracles. He possessed the gift of languages; every one of his hearers understood him in his own language; of his 30,000 hearers those who stood the farthest off understood him as well as those standing near to him. A miracle was his so-called fish-sermon in Rimini; and the subsequent conversion of sinners and heretics. Thirty-two years after his death, St. Bonaventure found his tongue as fresh as the tongue of a living person.

Every one rejoices at such miracles, to whom the word of God is a dear treasure, and who can say in the words of Psalm cxviii, 72, 103: "The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousand of gold and silver. How sweet are thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth."

b. His gift of prophecy.

In a young lawyer given to levity and extravagance at Puy in France, he recognized and venerated a future martyr. To a woman, who was in labor, he announced that she would bear a future martyr (the Franciscan friar Philip).

Every one rejoices at these prophecies, who sees in them the fulfillment of the promise made by Jesus. "When he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth * * * and the things that are to come, he will show you." John xvi, 13.

c. Miracles by which faith in the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar was confirmed. Of this kind was the miracle wrought on Bovillo's mule, which, although it had no food for three days, left the oats placed before it untouched, at the command of the Saint, and honored the Creator present in the holy Eucharist, prostrate on its knees, and its head sunk, until

the most blessed Sacrament was carried back into church. Bovillo abjured his error, and died a penitent. A similar miracle was wrought by the Saint in France.

Every Christian rejoices at such miracles, to whom the holy Eucharist is his supreme good, and the communion with Jesus by the reception of the angelic bread is the greatest delight, and the sweetest foretaste and pledge of everlasting happiness.

d. The repeated raising of the dead to life. St. Anthony raised many dead to life. A certain friar knew twelve persons who were called to life again through the intercession of St. Anthony. His nephew, drowned in the river Tajo, awoke to life through the intercession of the Saint, in the presence of a great multitude.

Where is the Christian who would not rejoice at such a manifestation of divine power? Do they not confirm our sweetest hope in a future resurrection, as this hope was the only consolation to Job (xix, 25) in his dire sufferings? We see therein the power of Him who is "the resurrection and the life." John xi, 25. We rejoice that God has given such power to men, to do the works that the Son of God has done, and greater than these. John xiv, 12.

The bright light of St. Anthony has shown for more than six hundred years in the splendor of his virtues which proceeded from his love of God as their source. It shines forth too in his numerous miracles. We should, however, not forget that God, in miracles, ever intends to reach a higher end, by promoting virtue. If so, miracles will cause a great delight in our hearts, and establish us in virtue.

Emmanuel Azevedo of Coimbra.

Ascension of our Lord.

VII.

HOMILY.

The ascension of our Lord is the glorious termination of his earthly pilgrimage. It is a day of glory and joy to Jesus as well as to us, for whom he is preparing mansions in heaven. The Gospel for this solemn day relates (1) that Jesus conferred great power on the Apostles; and (2) that he ascended into heaven.

I.

THE POWER CONFERRED ON THE APOSTLES.

1. The interpreters of Holy Scripture do not agree as to *the time* when this apparition of Jesus took place. According to St. Augustine, St. Gregory and St. Bernard, it took place on this day, which the Church has set apart for the annual celebration of that glorious event. This opinion seems to be the more probable, because it is in accordance with the tradition of the Church, who orders the portion of the Gospels which relates that event to be read in her Liturgy on this day. Jesus upbraided his Apostles on that occasion with their former incredulity and hardness of heart, because they had not believed them who had seen him after he was risen again. He chose this occasion to upbraid them with their incredulity, because he was to send them into the whole world as messengers of faith, to teach the nations to believe those things which they (the nations) had not seen, and thus to do with a cheerful heart what the Apostles had been tardy to do.

2. Thereupon the Lord confers on them the fulness of Apostolic mission, arming them with full authority to go into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; whilst when he sent them first, he gave them a limited mission, saying: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles; and into the cities of the

Samaritans enter not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." For as he had received, through his death, all nations of the world for his inheritance, so he confers his power on his Apostles, saying: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," or as St. Matthew has it: "Teach all *nations*."

3. It would be an ungrateful undertaking for the Apostles to teach all nations, unless those nations had been obliged to accept their teaching. Therefore our Lord promises life everlasting to those who would believe, and threatens the unbelievers with eternal condemnation. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

a. These words clearly teach that without faith and baptism it is impossible to obtain salvation. Baptism of water, however, can be replaced by the baptism of desire and of blood. But faith, when there is question of rational adults, can never be dispensed with; and that it may deserve the name, it can be received only from the preaching of those legitimately sent. Those who pretend that man can be saved by every religion, are, therefore, in opposition to the word of God.

b. They exhort us to give heart-felt thanks for the grace of baptism and of the true faith, especially by a virtuous life—a living faith,—since faith without works is dead. James ii, 17, 20. Does our faith produce the works of justice, chastity, love of God and our neighbor, of humility, mortification, etc.?

4. "And these signs shall follow them that believe," etc. A consoling promise, which was fulfilled

a. *Literally* in the Apostles. The Evangelist calls the attention of his contemporaries to the well-known fact, that the Lord confirmed the word with signs that followed. Every one heard them speaking in his own tongue. Act. ii, 8. St. Paul suffered no harm from the viper that was fastened on his hand. Act. xxviii, 5. St. John suffered no harm from the cup of poison. St. Paul healed all that had diseases in the island of Malta. Act. xxviii, 8. Those in the house of Cornelius who had been converted to the faith spoke "in tongues." Act. x, 46; etc.

Miracles have been wrought in all ages, when the spread of Christian faith made it desirable. St. Francis Xavier wrought many miracles in India and in Japan. Christine, a poor handmaid, healed by her prayer the sick child of the queen of Bulgaria, in consequence of which the whole nation was converted to the faith. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers." I Cor. xiv, 22.

b. *Spiritually* it is fulfilled by the conversion of sinners. For, as St. Bernard remarks, the first effect of active faith is the contrition of heart, by which the devils are cast out of the heart of man.

Then those who believe in Christ, speak with new tongues, by forsaking their former wickedness. No more cursing, calumniating, impure conversation.

They take up serpents, by subduing their own passions.

If they shall drink any deadly thing—the false maxims of the world,—it shall not hurt them.

What there is yet infirm and unhealthy, shall be healed by good works.

II.

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD.

1. "And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight." St. Luke gives a more minute description, saying: "He led them out as far as to Bethania: and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, that he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven" (Lk. xxiv. 50); "and a cloud received him out of their sight." Act. i, 9.

a. On the mount *Olivet* Jesus had shown himself in his deepest debasement; there he showed himself also in his exaltation above all creatures. There he blessed his Apostles by conferring on them divine grace and assistance in their apostolic labors.—Oh! that we also would long for this blessing of Jacob, for spiritual and celestial goods, rather than for the blessing of Esau, that consisted only in the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth.

b. "And whilst they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them, in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall he come as you have seen him going into heaven." Act. i, 10, 11. "And they, adoring, went back to Jerusalem with great joy." Lk. xxiv, 52.

We should also keep our spiritual eyes lifted up toward heaven, where Christ ascended, to prepare mansions for us. There at the right of the Father, our nature has been exalted to a higher dignity, than it possessed in Paradise. "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." Col. iii, 1, 2.

As the Apostles adored Jesus, before they returned to Jerusalem, so we should also adore Jesus, who sitting at the right hand of the Father, has been exalted above all creatures. He is our Lord, because he has purchased us with his precious blood.

In compliance with the exhortation of the two Angels, let us often remember of the coming of Jesus at the last judgment, to judge the living and the dead; so that wholesome fear may keep us from sin, and the words of the Apostle may be fulfilled in us: "When Christ shall appear who is your life; then shall you also appear with him in glory." Col. iii, 4.

2. "But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed." When St. Mark wrote these words, the Gospel was already spread throughout many lands. Yet it was not the word of the illiterate Apostles only, but the working of the Lord and the miracles performed that made the Gospel acceptable to the nations. The Lord has ever worked with the missionaries sent by the Catholic Church, whilst he left the heralds of heresy to their own frailty.

The preaching of the word of God produces no fruit, unless the Lord works withal, by illuminating preacher and hearers wherefore we should never hear the word of God without invoking the Holy Ghost.

VIII.

HEAVEN A REWARD.

While the Apostles looked on Jesus was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. And whilst they were beholding him going up to heaven, two angels stood by them, in white garments, saying: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus shall come as you have seen him going into heaven. Act. i, 9-11. Although it is good for us to have our spiritual eyes lifted up toward heaven, yet it will be of no avail, unless we strive to gain heaven by strenuous efforts. The beauty of heaven being hidden from us behind an impenetrable cloud we should act according to the warning of the Holy Ghost: "Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things that are above thy ability: but in the things that God hath *commanded* thee, think on them always." Ecclus. iii, 22. Let us do what God has commanded, and heaven will be ours. *For heaven is a reward.*

I.

A REWARD FOR MERITS.

1. *We cannot obtain heaven but by merits.* When Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you," he addressed his Apostles, whose great merits he foresaw; and even to them he said: "You are they who have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed to me, a kingdom." Lk. xxii, 28. Jesus was exalted after having gained infinite merits; and his Apostles were exalted, because they had persevered with him in many temptations.

We also obtain heaven only

a. If we merit it; otherwise not. God has so ordained it, that heaven should be reached by merit only, not by favor. "This glory is to all his saints." Ps. cxlix, 9. But where there are no merits the Lord will say: "Depart from me. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat," etc.

It is self-evident that we cannot gain merits worthy of an infinite reward by any power of our own unaided nature; but only by our communion with Jesus Christ, we being branches inserted in the Vine. Jesus did for us what we are not able to do of ourselves; but what we are able to do he left to be done by us. "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your vocation and election." II Pet. i, 10.

b. Because we merit it. Such is the demand of divine justice and sanctity. In the world man may oftentimes obtain reward and honor without merits, but by sinister ways, by usurpation, favoritism, etc. God weighs our merits on the scale of sanctity, knowing no crown but the "crown of justice." II Tim. iv, 8.

c. Inasmuch as we merit it. Jesus speaks of "many mansions in the house of his Father." He distinguishes between "entering life," and "finding a treasure in heaven;" the latter clearly indicating more than the first. The Apostle speaks of sowing sparingly and reaping sparingly. Therefore the heavenly mansions are different, and "only different, because the merits are different." St. Bernard. Then many a beggar will have the precedence of kings—the reward being proportionate to the merits.

2. *Heaven is an infallible reward for merits.*

a. It is an infallible reward. The world does often not acknowledge true merits, and in many cases is not able to reward them. Divine wisdom, faithfulness, and omnipotence, are to reward everyone according to his merits. God will reward the least things: the cup of water, the good words and desires.

b. But promised only for true merits. We frequently notice a double error in this regard. Some hope firmly for heaven, because, at least in their own opinion, they do nothing bad. But did you gain merits by doing nothing? Is the idler worthy of wages? Others put their confidence in their works that are only done in the service of the world. If you did not work for God, you should require your pay from another master. And, besides, whatever you did in the state of disgrace, was no divine service.

Let us earnestly investigate, whether we have a claim to the reward of heaven. Are our merits such as to give us hope? "O ye sons of men, how long will ye be dull of heart? why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?" Ps. iv, 3. The only answer you can give to this question of the prophet is to ameliorate your lives, by laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Mt. vi, 20.

II.

A REWARD FOR SUFFERINGS.

It is by virtue of the divine will that an indolent life never was, nor ever will be, a seminary of virtues. Even the Gentiles were convinced of this truth, whence they underwent many hardships for obtaining merely civil virtues, "and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one." I Cor. ix, 25. We have the more reason to act in a similar manner, as we know that, after the loss of innocence, we cannot find our salvation, except by the way of the cross and of penance.

1. *Only by tribulations we can obtain heaven.*

a. We are taught so *first* by the example of Jesus Christ, "who having joy proposed unto him, underwent the cross, despising the shame; and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii, 2; who said to the disciples on their way to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" Lk. xxiv, 26; who in answer to a petition of his disciples, said: "Can you drink of the chalice that I shall to drink?" Verily, Jesus Christ never spoke of any other way leading to heaven but the way of the cross.—We are taught so *secondly* by the example of the Saints, who all followed the footsteps of the suffering Jesus, so as to rejoice at their afflictions, and to complain of not being afflicted enough.

b. The same is taught by assertions that warn men against a luxurious life. "Wo to you that are rich! Wo to you that are filled!" Lk. vi, 24, 25. Parable of Dives. And by

assertions that exhort to suffering. "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are they that suffer persecution." The Apostles were "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith: for that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." Act. xiv, 21.

c. Experience confirms the same doctrine. For we are witnesses of the vain efforts to become happy by the joys of the world, which are preceded, accompanied and followed by many tribulations and anxieties. God himself mixes our earthly joys with bitterness and calamity, that we may keep our hearts detached from them. Let us pay attention to the dispositions of Divine Providence.

2. *Yet not every kind of tribulations leads us to heaven.*

a. Everyone has to suffer. God has ordained things in such a manner, that each one receives his share of afflictions. Yet sufferings are only acceptable to God, if they have certain qualities.

b. We know even of damnable sufferings: when the heart is tormented by passions, and racked by ambition, envy, hatred, wrath, etc. Men addicted to such and similar vices, often suffer more than the most austere penitents; yet it does not profit them, because they suffer for vain things, or even, like the evil spirits, for wicked things.

c. Only to suffer for justice sake is meritorious; that is to suffer for a just cause, if you, for instance, rather suffer than take revenge, than violate your conscience, than renounce your faith, etc. Here the words apply: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mt. v, 10. Besides we should suffer with a good intention, not impatiently but for the love of Jesus, following the heroes of faith of the primeval Church, who could say in the words of the Apostle: "For thy sake we are put to death, all the day long." Rom. viii, 36.

It is impossible to pass through life without affliction, since

the efforts to obtain virtue, and the inevitable evils of the world, demand sacrifices. Why are we so foolish as to endure our inevitable sufferings without merits? The exceedingly great joys of heaven are imparted only as a reward for merits.

Bourdaloue.

Sixth Sunday After Easter.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel for this Sunday is a part of the last discourse addressed by Jesus to his disciples. The Church selected it for this day, in order to cause in our hearts an ardent longing for the Holy Ghost. It contains the promise of our Lord to send the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles and disciples, and the prophecy of their persecution by the world.

I.

THE SENDING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The promise to send the Holy Ghost is a great consolation, if you reflect on who the Holy Ghost is. He is

1. *The Spirit of the Father and the Son*—proceeding from both at once as from one source. Hence it follows

a. That he is a Divine Person—true God. A Paraclete, a Spirit, who will come, who is sent, who proceeds, who will give testimony, cannot but signify a distinct, an individual Person.

b. That we cannot be sanctified but by the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth: because he asketh for the saints according to God." Rom. viii, 26.

c. That we ought to adore the Holy Ghost, as we adore the Father and the Son.

2. *The Paraclete, the divine Paraclete*, proceeding from, and sent by, the Father and the Son. As Paraclete he proved himself

a. To the disciples of the Lord in their persecutions, for "they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." Act. v, 41. St. Paul exclaimed: "I fear none of these things (chains and afflictions): neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course." Act. xx, 24.

b. To us also; for he consoles us in bodily afflictions by reminding us of the divine love, bounty and wisdom; and in spiritual afflictions, by reminding us of the divine mercy, and grace, and of the heavenly reward.

3. *The Spirit of truth.* He gives testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and that, by believing in him, we shall have life everlasting. "It is the Spirit that testifieth, that Christ is the truth." I John v, 6. This testimony is

a. Incontestable, because it was confirmed by miracles, and given by the Apostles by the power of the Holy Ghost, in presence of the enemies of Jesus, so that these "had compunction in their hearts," and in the first day about three thousand souls were added to the flock of Christ. Act. ii, 37, 41.

b. General. For it was given throughout the whole earth, and will last unto the consummation of the ages.

Let us also give testimony to Jesus by our faith, and conduct.

II.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE APOSTLES.

It was very salutary to the Apostles, that Jesus forewarned them of the afflictions and persecutions they would have to endure for his sake.

1. It had the effect of preserving them from pusillanimity and scandal. "These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized."

a. Affliction and tribulation are often the cause of averting man from God. "In time of temptation they fall away." Lk. viii, 13.

b. Therefore Jesus promises consolation in our afflictions, that we may not fall away.

Let us expect the promised grace with ardent desire, and profit from the grace obtained.

2. He taught them meekness towards their persecutors. For "these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Lk. xxiii, 34.

a. How great was the love of Jesus, who excuses hatred and malignity against himself and his disciples, as if they were merely the fruit of ignorance and blindness.

b. Let us also excuse our enemies in the words of Jesus: "They know not what they do." This will enable us to suffer with greater meekness and patience.

3. He reminded us of the fact, that no state of life is exempt from affliction.

a. Jesus predicted to his disciples, that their exalted position would subject them to persecution.

b. Far be it from us to expect in our state of life nothing but joy. "Most dearest, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you." I Pet. iv, 12.

Let us, in these days, long and pray for the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the teacher of truth and the witness of Jesus Christ. In sufferings and afflictions we shall experience his consolation and help, and thus strengthened, partake of the glory of Christ.

VIII.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Jesus calls the Holy Ghost the *Paraclete*, a name often ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Indeed, by this name His function is best signified—the function of consoling Christians. Let me invite your attention to this subject.

I.

WHY DOES THE HOLY GHOST CONSOLE GOOD CHRISTIANS?

He consoles them especially for two reasons:

1. Because they have to suffer many tribulations on earth.

a. This we know:

From Holy Scripture. "All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II Tim. iii, 12. "As gold in the furnace he hath proved them." Wisd. iii, 6.

From the lives of Saints. Call to mind the indescribable sufferings of holy martyrs, and the persecutions of the confessors of Christ, as of St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory, St. Athanasius.

From daily experience. How great are the afflictions of the just! The words of David apply at all times: "Many are the afflictions of the just." Ps. xxxiii, 20.

b. Therefore Divine Providence strengthens the just by spiritual consolations, that they may not succumb under the burden of so many tribulations. God does not withhold such consolations. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us; so also by Christ doth our comfort abound." II Cor. i, 5.

2. That he may detain them from fleshly and sensual pleasures.

The human heart cannot be long without joy. And that the just man may be able to renounce mere earthly pleasures, the Holy Ghost pours out into his heart perceptible consolation, the dignity and purity of which are so great, that all the pleasures of the world cannot come in comparison with it.

II.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE HOLY GHOST CONSOLES US.

The sources of spiritual joy and consolation are:

1. *The theological virtues.*

a. The light of faith is enkindled in our mind by the Holy Ghost, who, by inspiring within us a knowledge of the beauty of our faith, consoles us in our pilgrimage. The Apos-

tle prayed for this gift of understanding when he said: "The God of hope fill you with all joy and hope in believing." Rom. xv, 13.

b. The hope of the Christian soul is sometimes so great, that she seems to be already in possession of heaven. "Rejoice in hope." Rom. xii, 12.

c. The Holy Ghost inflames the divine love in our hearts. As the fire mounts on high, when the wind blows, so love is inflamed by the breathing of the Holy Ghost, so as to fill the soul with ineffable joy.

2. *Mental prayer.*

a. It is in itself well calculated to fill the heart with joy. For to him who loves, nothing is more attractive than to converse with, and to remember the object of his affections. This is the case whenever we are absorbed in mental prayer.

b. Our joy increases when our petitions are granted. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth: and I extolled him with my tongue." Ps. lxv, 16.

3. *The testimony of a good conscience.*

"Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience." II Cor. i, 12. For although "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred" (Eccle. ix, 1) yet there are certain signs, which may appease our troubled mind. "For the Spirit giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." Rom. viii, 16. The dignity of the children of God is so exalted, that even a well-founded hope, although it is not without fear, imparts to a pious mind a great joy, especially on our death-bed. "I have not lived such a life, that I ought to be ashamed of it; nor do I fear to die, since we have a good Shepherd." St. Ambrose.

4. *The special privileges of the children of God.*

It is easier to count the stars of heaven, than those privileges. God protects his children as the apple of his eye, no hair falls from their head without his will. The eyes of his mercy are always opened upon them, his ears always inclined to their prayer.

He has commanded his angels to protect them. "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: thou hast given gladness in my heart." Ps. iv, 7.

III.

MEANS OF OBTAINING THESE CONSOLATIONS.

1. Cleanse the house of your soul by true compunction of the heart and by the Sacrament of Penance. "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding; and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in." Wisd. i, 4, 5.

2. Pray with devotion and perseverance, as the Apostles did when they were awaiting the Holy Ghost. Act. i, 14. "I remember to have often joined the night to the day, calling up to heaven, and not ceasing to strike my breast until, at the command of the Lord, tranquillity of mind returned." St. Jerome.

3. Render your prayer more efficacious by good works, as by fasting, alms-giving, patience at your work, forgiveness of offences, etc., that, by virtue of these works, it may penetrate heaven.

Louis of Granada.

Whitsunday.

VII.
HOMILY.

In the Epistle of this day of Pentecost the descending of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles is related. By the Gospel we are reminded of the effects produced by the Holy Ghost in our souls. The Gospel is a part of the last discourse addressed by our Lord to his disciples, and contains (1) the doctrine of the divine love; (2) the promise of the Holy Ghost; and (3) the parting words of Jesus.

I.

JESUS EXHORTS HIS DISCIPLES TO LOVE GOD.

The Apostle Jude had questioned Jesus, why he revealed himself only to his Apostles, and not to the world; whereupon he answered, that only those who are possessed of divine love, are worthy of this grace, saying:

1. "If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make an abode with him."

What is, therefore, the love of God, and of what avail is this love? It is the observance of God's commandments. If we observe that which the word of God enjoins on us, we love God, and the blessing invariably connected with this observance is, that God loves us in return and makes an abode with us. A son loves his father, if he cheerfully does what the father bids him to do; and the father loves the son, who is ever intent upon fulfilling his will.

Let no one say, that it is too difficult to observe all the commandments of God. "If any one love me, he will keep my word." And St. John writes: "This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not heavy." I John v, 3.—In order to do the will of God, nothing more is required than to love him above all things; and is it difficult to love Him who is the most amiable?

How great efforts are made to please men! Is it not more honorable and profitable to endeavor to please God by leading a life in accordance with his word?

2. "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my word. And the word which you have heard is not mine; but the Father's who sent me." Sometimes a bad man says: "I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?" Ecclus. v, 4. Could a greater harm befall you, than the loss of divine love? "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." I Cor. xvi, 22. He who despises the word of Christ, despises the word of the Father, because Christ revealed only the word which the Father had commanded him to reveal; wherefore it is "the Father's who sent me." Woe to that man who rebels against God, by resisting his holy will! But if God is for you; if God is your friend: who is against you; whose enmity have you to fear?

II.

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY GHOST.

"These things have I spoken to you, remaining with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."

1. Great is the dignity of man, that God the Father sent on this day the Holy Ghost in the name of his Son, for the sake of our salvation. The Father "so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." John iii, 16. And when the Son, after having performed the work of our redemption, had returned to heaven, the Father gave us the Holy Ghost to take the place of his Son.—God the Son is come into the world to seek and to save that which was lost; and has loved us unto the end. And when he was to take possession of his heavenly kingdom, he left us not as orphans, but prayed the Father to send in his stead the Holy Ghost to accomplish in his Elect the work of sanctification.

2. Jesus himself informs us for what purpose the Holy Ghost would come. "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." The Holy Ghost is our Paraclete and Teacher. Therefore let us listen to the voice of the Holy Church, whose teacher is the Spirit of truth; let us never fear for the future of our Holy Church, because the Paraclete will never forsake her. "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever." John xiv, 16.

III.

JESUS TAKES LEAVE OF HIS DISCIPLES.

1. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world giveth, do I give to you."

As the holy angels at the birth of Christ announced peace to men, so Jesus leaves peace as the most precious blessing with his disciples at his departure. Peace he left with us on earth, our peace, mutual charity. His peace, the eternal rest, he will give to us, when he returns to consummate all things.—His peace is true, real peace, not merely the appearance of peace. The Apostles and the first Christians enjoyed this peace perfectly. "The multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul." Act. iv, 32. Blessed are you, if you live in peace with all men; but woe to them who live in quarrel and enmity with their fellow-men! They have lost the sign by which the disciples of Jesus are distinguished; they have lost the peace which Jesus was anxious to leave with us.

2. "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe."

Jesus consoles his disciples in these words, telling them that he would come again after a short absence. You should not be

sad, says our Lord, but should be glad, if you would love me with an unselfish love, because I go to the Father to receive my reward for my human nature that is to be glorified. For my Father is greater than I am, as man, in my human nature; wherefore I expect my reward from him.

Those of us who are intent upon performing good works, and at the hour of death entertain a well-founded hope of dying in the grace of God, may console their weeping friends in a similar manner, reminding them of the resurrection, and of the great blessing of being taken up to the Father.

3. Jesus Christ was justified in saying the above words, because he was without sin, and loved the Father. "Now I will not speak many things with you," etc. The Lord meant to say: The wicked spirit is coming to seize upon me by his helpers. He has no dominion over me, for it was the love of my Father which induced me to suffer. Let us, therefore, arise and go to the place where my enemies are to meet me.

The Father hath given his Son commandment to suffer. Yet he was innocent, and we are guilty. Let us then suffer patiently after the example of Jesus Christ, and even accept death with resignation at the hands of God. By afflictions and death we must prove our love for the Lord God.

VIII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

Jesus Christ says of the Holy Ghost, whom he promised to his Apostles, that he is the Spirit of truth, and that he would give testimony of him. The Spirit of truth gives testimony of Jesus Christ in many ways. We may distinguish especially a treble testimony of the Holy Ghost, a testimony in our hearts, a testimony by the teaching of the Church, and a testimony by his guidance in the history of the world. Permit me to call your special attention to this latter testimony, which is very instruc-

tive and consoling in our days. The Holy Ghost has made known to all men by the history of the world the following truths: (1) That there can be no prosperity of men and nations without faith in God. (2) No knowledge of God without Christ. (3) No Christ without the Church. (4) No Church without the Pope.

I.

The first truth is this, that the *prosperity of men and nations is not possible without faith in God.* The most fatal error of our age is the illusion that men can be happy without religion, without God.

Without God there can be no *morality.* Where there is no true knowledge of God, the holiest and most perfect good, morality is destroyed in the combat against sin, against the concupiscence of the eyes and of the flesh, and against the pride of life.

Without God there can be no *conscience.* We follow the dictates of our conscience, only because we are convinced of its being the voice of God.

Without God there is no *right.* The opinions of men change with human prejudice and passion. Only where the firm belief prevails that God has regulated the fundamental laws of human society, and that he has set certain limits to human liberty which it is not allowed to transgress, are men afraid to commit injustice, and maintain right and justice.

Without God there can be no *liberty.* Only truth can make us free. Infidelity and sin make us slaves of the devil. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii, 34.

Without God there is no *authority.* Authority is based on the truth, that parents, superiors, magistrates, etc., hold the place of God. Therefore, if there is no God, there is no title to obedience.

Without God there is no *law.* Where there is no fear of God, no threatenings nor punishments are a sufficient protection of life and property.

Without God there can be no *charity*. If there is no Father of all in heaven; if we are not images of the one God, brethren and co-heirs of the same beatitude; then we are not only alienated from but are even enemies to one another.

Without God *egotism* prevails. Avarice and sensuality are the tyrants, who put man's own self in the place of God, and induce man to adore himself as his idol, and to sacrifice to this idol all things, even the life of his fellow-men.

Without God the *combat of all against all* is the normal state of human society. In the service of their tyrannical passions, the mighty will oppress the feeble; the feeble will revolt against the mighty. War between rich and poor will be permanent; and peace on earth is made impossible.

Without God there is no *peace of nations*, but only outwitting, subjugation, and destruction, of one another.

II.

The *second truth* testified by the Holy Ghost, is this, that there is no true knowledge of God without Christ. Although human nature is able to prove the existence of God, yet the word of Christ is true for ever, that "everyone that doeth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light." John iii, 20. The fool, that is the sinner, whom sin made a voluntary fool, hath said in his heart: "There is no God." Ps. xiii, 1. Atheism does not originate in human reason, but in the worst folly, in sin.

Christ delivered us, through his death, from the yoke of sin. He is "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." John i, 9. "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Mt. xi, 27. When the visible God, Jesus Christ, is denied, the faith in an invisible God will take no root.

III.

The *third truth*, to which the Holy Ghost gives testimony in our times, is this: "Without church no Christ." Open your eyes, and you will see, that the vivid faith in Jesus Christ, his doctrine, his institutions, his power, are nowhere found but in

the Church of Christ. That faith in Christ is impossible without the authority of the Church we see clearly in modern Protestantism. If the authority of the Church established by Jesus Christ is once denied, the arbitrariness of every individual is the only norm of his faith. The instruction and sanctification of men is to be performed, not by direct intercourse with God, but by the mouth of God's messengers, the Apostles and their successors, through the hand of those who are "the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." I Cor. iv, 1. Therefore Jesus Christ sends them continually into the whole world, with the same power, as he received from the Father; by virtue of which power they make the nations their disciples.

Outside of the Church we find only the dead letter of Holy Scripture, interpreted according to the private judgment of every individual.

IV.

The *fourth truth* is, that there is no church without Peter, without the Pope. An evidence of this assertion is furnished by the languishing condition of the churches of the East. They had a glorious and splendid history throughout the centuries, during which they were united with the centre of Christian unity. But in proportion as they forsook this centre, their vital strength disappeared. The sects and the several schismatical organizations are like the billows of the turbulent ocean; one wave swallows up another; whilst in the midst stands immovable, today as eighteen hundred years ago, the Church of Christ founded upon Peter, the rock.

The world is at present in a state of rebellion against the Holy Father, because it hates the Church, and Christ, and God. The faithful children of the Church are in a condition that reminds us of the Babylonian captivity. As the children of Israel shed tears when they remembered Sion, so our hearts are filled with sadness and grief. But let us put our confidence in the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who will be our helper in his own good time.

Bishop Ketteler.

Trinity Sunday.

VII.
HOMILY.

The Gospel for Trinity Sunday reminds us of the great power conferred upon the priests of the New Covenant, for the benefit of all men; who, by it, are to be made supernatural images of the Blessed Trinity. Jesus Christ conferred it on the Eleven on a mountain of Galilee. We learn from this Gospel (1) the origin of the sacerdotal power; (2) and its nature and extent.

I.

ORIGIN OF THE SACERDOTAL POWER.

The sacerdotal power of the Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests, has its origin, not on earth, but in heaven; not from men, but from God. For they have received the same power which was given to Jesus in heaven and on earth.

Jesus refers, not to the power which he had as God from all eternity, nor to the power which he had received in virtue of the hypostatic union of the Divine Person with human nature; but to the power which he merited through his Passion and Cross.

Jesus received, after his resurrection, for his glorified human nature all power in *heaven*, as King of Angels; and on *earth*, as Head of his Church, to establish her on earth, and to gather all nations into her fold; and to sanctify souls for the eternal kingdom.

Having received this great power, he could also impart it to his Apostles. What a consolation to us that He to whom all power was given in heaven and in earth, said to his disciples: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John xx, 23), and: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." Mt. xviii, 18.

Let us then respect the sacerdotal grace as a celestial power conferred upon the priests by God himself. Let us also be thankful that God has given so great power to men, for the benefit of the faithful.

II.

THE OBJECT OF THE SACERDOTAL POWER.

Jesus conferred on his Apostles a triple power:

1. *To teach all nations.* St. Mark tells us what they are commissioned to teach. "Preach the Gospel to every creature," the good tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, the knowledge of the necessary truths of faith, as they have learned it in the school of Jesus and of the Holy Ghost; not from private opinions.—The former mandate addressed to the Apostles to go only to the lost ones of the house of Israel is hereby withdrawn. The whole world, ransomed through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, is to be the field of their action.

We, being of the number of those who have been instructed in the true faith from childhood, should ever be thankful for this great grace, by a firm faith, and by leading a life according to the faith.

2. *To administer the holy sacraments.* "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Those who receive the sacrament of baptism, impose upon themselves also the duty of receiving the other means of salvation.

Men are baptized in the name of the Blessed Trinity, because the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is especially the mystery of faith, and baptism is especially the sacrament of faith. Besides it is expressed by this form of baptism, that it derives its efficacy from the Father who sent his Son into the world; from the Son who instituted it, and, by his precious blood, made it efficacious; and from the Holy Ghost who, as the water cleanses the body, by his grace cleanses the soul. Finally, this form is to remind us of the second creation through baptism. For, as in the first creation of man, the Blessed Trinity went, so to say, into deliberation, so this august mystery is represented to our mind in the second creation also.

3. *To govern the Church.* The Apostles and their successors are commissioned to maintain discipline and good order in the Church of God. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Before baptism the nations were to be instructed in the Christian faith; after it, in Christian morals. The Apostles had heard from the lips of their divine Master what commandments men are obliged to observe, and therefore the Apostles ought to be obeyed. "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Mt. xviii, 17. The Church gives her precepts in virtue of the power conferred on her by the Saviour; wherefore to despise them is to despise Jesus Christ himself. "He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Lk. x, 16.

III.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE SACERDOTAL POWER.

1. Jesus conferred this triple power not only upon the Apostles, but also upon their successors; for he adds: "And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." The Apostles did not live personally to the consummation of the world; but they lived to the consummation of the world in their successors, to whom the triple power was transmitted.

2. At the same time our Lord, when he conferred this power upon his Apostles, made the magnificent promise to the successors of the Apostles that he would assist them in their most arduous work, which—humanly speaking—seemed to be impossible of accomplishment. I am, unchangeably, unceasingly, with you without a moment's intermission ("all days") to the end of time, protecting and guarding you from error. By virtue of this solemn promise the same faith is perpetually taught, the same sacraments administered, the same morals enjoined. How consoling are these last words of our Saviour addressed to his Apostles!

3. By endowing his Church with this triple power, Jesus enjoined on us duties corresponding to this power. He commissioned the Church to teach, and endowed her with infallibility; and he obliged us to accept her teaching as the infallible truth. He commissioned her to administer the holy sacraments; he obliged us to make frequent use of these means of grace. He commissioned her to govern us in his stead; he obliged us to be subject to her guidance, and especially to observe her precepts.

VIII.

WHY AND HOW WE SHOULD PAY SPECIAL HOMAGE TO THE AUGUST MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

Trinity Sunday divides the Ecclesiastical Year into two parts. The first part, beginning with Advent, represents to our minds the manner in which Jesus accomplished the work of our Redemption; in the second part, which, beginning with Trinity Sunday, ends at Advent, we are reminded of the manner in which Jesus, through the Holy Ghost, applies to us the fruit of Redemption. Trinity Sunday is, as it were, the Octave of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. In Christmas time and the preceding Advent our attention was directed to God the Father who so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son; at Easter and during Lent, the preparatory time for Easter, we beheld God the Son performing the work of Redemption; at Pentecost we were reminded of the Holy Ghost, who then began to abide in the Church, in order to sanctify our souls. To-day the Three Divine Persons are represented to our minds at once, that we may pay a special homage to the august mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We cannot better honor this festival than by enquiring into the reasons why, and into the manner how, we should honor in a special way this sublimest of all mysteries.

I.

WHY WE SHOULD PAY A SPECIAL HOMAGE TO THIS MYSTERY.

1. *Because it is the sublimest mystery of our holy religion.*

As Jeremias, who when called to be a prophet unto the na-

tions, exclaimed, "Ah, ah, ah, Lord God: behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child," so all men and angels must confess their inability to speak worthily of this most august mystery. Let me, therefore, merely place before your minds what faith teaches us concerning the most blessed Trinity.

There is but one God in Three Persons, of whom each is true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is begotten of no one, nor proceeds from any one; the Son is begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

a. We believe that there is but one God. "The first commandment of all is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God." Mk. xii, 27. For God is the sovereign, most perfect being. If there were more gods, they were either equals, and then none of them were the sovereign, perfect being; or they were unequals, and then those who were less perfect, could not be the sovereign and most perfect good. God made a covenant with the Israelitic people for the purpose of preserving on earth the faith in one God.

b. We believe also that there are Three Divine Persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Although this mystery was intimated in the Old Testament, yet it was not clearly revealed before the teaching of Jesus Christ. When he was to commence his public teaching, this Most Holy Mystery was made known to men, on the occasion of his baptism. Mt. iii, 16. The last commission wherewith he charged his Apostles was: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

c. Each one of the Three Persons is true God: the Father is true God, the Son is true God, and the Holy Ghost is true God. Therefore each one of them possesses the divine perfections, as eternity, omnipotence, etc.; whence it follows that the Three Divine Persons are not greater than one of them, since each one possesses the fullness of the Godhead. Yet they

are not three Gods, but one God, because all three Persons have one and the same indivisible nature and substance. If each Person had a separate substance, distinct from the substance of the other Persons, they would be three Gods.

d. Nevertheless the Three Divine Persons are distinct from one another. One is the Father, another is the Son, another is the Holy Ghost. The Father is of himself, and thereby he is distinct from the Son, who is begotten of the Father, and from the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both. The Son is the begotten of the Father, and thereby he is distinct from the Father, who is begotten of no one; as also from the Holy Ghost, who is not begotten, but proceeds. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and thereby he is distinct from both, as they do not proceed. The distinctness of the three Divine Persons is, therefore, based on their mode of being; it does not concern the Divine Essence, which is the same in all three, but only the Divine Persons.

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is absolutely incomprehensible; and therefore the most divine of all mysteries. We can do no more than exclaim with St. Francis the Seraph: "My God, and my all!" The celestial spirits sing in amazement incessantly their *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, and they and the Saints cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power." Apoc. iv, 10. The militant Church on earth endeavors to vie with the triumphant Church in heaven in adoring the Most Holy Trinity. Her divine service is an uninterrupted glorification of this most august mystery.

2. *Because it is a most gracious mystery.*

We are indebted to this mystery for whatever is required for the salvation of our souls, to-wit:

a. Faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi, 6. Our Lord himself says: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mk. xvi, 16. But faith is a gift of the Most

Blessed Trinity. A gift of the Heavenly Father, who sent his Son into the world to teach us what we ought to believe for our salvation; wherefore Jesus said: "My doctrine is not mine, but of Him that sent me." John vii, 16. A gift of the Son, who preached the Gospel during three years, and established the infallible Church to announce the good tidings to all nations. A gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, who enlightens the Church and enables her to preserve and preach the Gospel in its incontaminated purity. He enlightens also her children, and moves them to accept the doctrine of the Church.

b. Remission of sins. Unless the Father had sent us a Redeemer, the fate of the rebellious angels would have been ours also. Unless the Son had given satisfaction to Divine Justice, no sin could have been forgiven. Unless the Holy Ghost prepared our souls by His grace for penance, and operated with us by the holy sacraments, our sins would remain. Therefore the holy sacraments of baptism and of penance, by which sins are forgiven, are administered in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

c. Divine grace. Without grace we are unable to keep the commandments, to obtain Christian virtue, to overcome temptations, to persevere in justice unto the end. Grace is also a gift of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Father who prepared graces for us, by sending his Son into the world; of the Son, who merited them for us by his Sacred Passion and Death; and of the Holy Ghost, who continually imparts to us these graces.

Let us therefore often repeat the words of the *Introit* of the festival Mass: "Praised be the Holy Trinity and undivided Unity; let us praise him, because he has shown mercy on us."

II.

IN WHAT MANNER WE SHOULD HONOR THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY.

The worthiest homage we can pay to the Most Holy Trinity is the sacrificing to him the three faculties of our soul, understanding, memory and will.

1. This sublimest mystery of our holy religion surpasses all understanding. The Holy Church repeats on this day the words of the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" Rom. xi, 33. No wonder that we are not able to comprehend the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, since so many things in visible nature are incomprehensible. Let it be enough that Jesus Christ has revealed this mystery, and that the infallible Church proposes it to our belief. If we believe learned men when they speak of the size of the sun or of the fixed stars, we have much more urgent reason to believe the Son of God, who said, that there are three Persons in God. Let us offer this sacrifice of our understanding, and the time will come when our faith shall be changed into vision.

2. Let us also sacrifice our memory to the Most Blessed Trinity, by remembering frequently the three great benefits of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

a. We attribute to the Father particularly the creation, wherefore we call him, in the Apostles' Creed, the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. He created us as rational beings; and all visible things he created for our benefit:—the sun, the moon, the stars; the flowers and herbs; the animals on the land and in the sea. He gave us the power to become his children and heirs of heaven. May the frequent remembrance of these great benefits move us to show sincere gratitude to our Heavenly Father!

b. To the Son we attribute particularly the work of *redemption.* When we were disabled from ever reaching heaven, the Son of God became man for us, and, after many hardships and sufferings, laid down his life for our salvation. He also deposited in his Church the treasures of his grace, that we might find in them the means of salvation.

c. To the Holy Ghost we attribute particularly the work of *sanctification.* He sanctifies the Church by teaching her all truth, and by sanctifying her children and by pouring out the divine love into their hearts. He consoles us in all tribulations, and strengthens us in temptations.

Let us then daily remember these three benefits, especially when we make the sign of the Cross.

3. It is also our duty to sacrifice our will to the Most Blessed Trinity:

a. To the Father, to whom we daily pray: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Every father demands obedience of his children. The only-begotten Son exhorts us by words and example to do the will of his Heavenly Father. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. vii, 21. "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect his work." John iv, 34.

b. To the Son. Jesus Christ is our model, whom we must resemble, being "made conformable to his image, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Rom. viii, 29. Let us often examine our own consciences, to find whether we are humble, meek, patient, and chaste; and whether we love Jesus so ardently as to be justified in saying with the Apostle: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20.

c. To the Holy Ghost. We are temples of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. May we never suffer our and God's enemy to destroy the temple of God, and drive away the Holy Spirit. "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." I Cor. iii, 17.

I conclude by repeating to you the words of the Apostle: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all.' II Cor. xiii, 13.

J. E. Zollner.

Corpus Christi.

IV.
HOMILY.

The Gospel for this festival day is a part of the discourse which Christ delivered after the miraculous multiplication of bread, wherein He promised the institution of the Holy Eucharist. He told the multitude in plain words what they should have learned from that great miracle, to-wit, that he was sent by God. "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent." John vi, 29. Thereupon the Jews demanded a new sign. "What sign then dost thou show that we may see, and believe thee? what doest thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert." Verses 30 and 31. Then Jesus seized the opportunity to speak to them of the true bread from heaven, his own Flesh and Blood. In the Gospel of this day our Saviour teaches us what the food is which He gives us, and what effects it should produce in us.

I.

REALITY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"My Flesh is meat indeed: and my Blood is drink indeed." These few words are very significant.

1. In order to redeem us, Jesus took our flesh in the womb of the purest Virgin, and afterwards sacrificed his virginal Flesh for us on the Cross. And that we might partake of the effects of this bloody sacrifice, he gave it to us as our food.

To eat of the flesh of the immolated victims was considered by the Israelites as a partaking of the salutary effects which it produced. Not content with becoming our companion in our earthly pilgrimage, not content with taking the form of a servant, not content with sacrificing himself for us on the Cross, he went so far as to give himself to us as our food. Oh wondrous and incomprehensible love of our God!

2. Jesus, by saying that his Flesh is meat *indeed*, and that his Blood is drink *indeed*, compares his Flesh and Blood with the Manna in the desert, or with the water springing forth from the rock struck with Moses' rod, or with any other food or drink, intimated that neither the one nor the other fulfills so truly and perfectly the destiny of food or drink, as his Flesh and Blood. For no other food confers or preserves the life of the soul, and the life of the body it preserves only for a short time; whilst his Flesh and Blood impart life *everlasting*, to the soul as well as to the body.

3. The mystery of his Flesh and Blood was to be an object of meritorious faith, not an object of vision. Therefore Jesus hides it under the species of bread and wine. On the eve of his Passion he took bread, blessed it and said: This is my Body; and he took also the chalice, blessed it and said: This is my Blood. He did not say: This signifies my Body, this signifies my Blood. He did not say: My Body is in this bread, my Blood is in this wine. Nor did he say: This will be my Body (in the act of eating), this will be my Blood. All this is arbitrarily put into his mouth by men, who are unwilling to believe in that which he has plainly said. For Jesus himself says in plain words: This is my Body, this is my Blood; this is my true Body, but under the species of bread, this is my true Blood, but under the species of wine. Thus he found the means of giving us his real Body to eat, and his real Blood to drink, yet so as to make it a mystery of our faith.

4. Let us not inquire with the Jews, how Jesus can give us his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink. He whose word we firmly believe, is the same, who being immortal, found a means to become mortal and thus to die for our expiation. He is the same who called heaven and earth into being, and with whom no word is impossible. Oh! instead of scrutinizing things which are incomprehensible to us, let us believe in the infinite, inventive, and almighty love of our God.

II.

THE EFFECTS OF HOLY EUCHARIST.

After having solemnly declared, that his Body is meat in-

deed, and his Blood is drink indeed, he speaks in the second place of the effects produced by this most blessed mystery. "He that eateth my Flesh," he says, "and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him." To be intimately united with Jesus Christ, is therefore the principal effect of Holy Communion. This union concerns both our body and our soul.

1. We are, in the first place, bodily united with Jesus. As his body is the bond of his union with us, since by virtue of his Incarnation he dwelt among us and was as one of us, so is the reception of his Body, on our part, the bond of our union with him. By virtue of this union with the virginal Flesh of Jesus, our flesh is subdued with its passions. This Flesh, immolated for us on the Cross, impresses on our mind the necessity of mortification. This Sacred Body which did not see corruption, is the germ of our future resurrection.

2. Yet woe to him who would only bodily be united with Jesus Christ; who does not discern the Body of the Lord! He shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord (I Cor. xi, 27-29), and commits a grievous sacrilege. For he who is contaminated with sin and is under the dominion of Belial, prevents Jesus from entering his soul. The effects of a worthy Communion upon our soul baffle description.

a. We are united with his soul most intimately. We are united with his holy will and with his Sacred Heart; united with his grace, which is so necessary for us in order to exercise virtue; united with his divinity, so that we are cleansed, sanctified, exalted and, as it were, deified.

b. Holy Communion imparts to our soul the grace of perseverance. For Jesus says not only, that by eating his Flesh we *are* in him, but that we *abide* in him, and he in us. This grace is the most precious of all, because without it all other graces would be of no avail. Therefore those who, after Holy Communion, ever relapse into the same mortal sins, have reason to fear for their preparation. For after a due preparation God would grant them the grace of perseverance.

c. The intimacy of this union is expressed in the words: "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same shall live also by me." Jesus speaks here of the immortal life of the soul, and also of the body. Jesus, as man, lives by virtue of the hypostatic union with the Godhead; and we obtain the supernatural and immortal life, by becoming one with him by virtue of the Eucharistic union.

At the end of to-day's Gospel Jesus repeats the same assertion, yet so as to call attention to the contrast with the bread in the desert. "This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat Manna and died. He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever." This bread, Jesus Christ, descended from heaven, whilst the Manna was a terrestrial bread. It imparts true life, everlasting life, whereas Manna did not even preserve terrestrial life except for a short time.

Second Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOLY EUCHARIST THE GREAT SUPPER.

Homily.

The Holy Fathers understand by the *great supper* both the celestial beatitude, and the Holy Eucharist. Of these two explanations, which, however, do not differ materially, since in heaven as well as in Holy Eucharist God himself is the object of fruition, the Holy Church seems to prefer the latter by selecting the Parable of the *great supper* to be read as Gospel for the Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi. By this selection the Holy Church exhorts us, her ministers, to invite you to the divine supper. I will therefore, in explaining to you the words of our Saviour, exhort you to frequent Holy Communion.

1. "A certain man made a great supper and invited many." This man is Jesus Christ himself, who instituted the Most Bles-

sed Sacrament of the Altar. It is a great, splendid, banquet indeed. It is great, as regards the meat, which is the Body and Blood of Christ; it is great, as regards the number of guests, all men being invited; great as regards the dignity of the guests, who are the children of God, a royal priesthood; it is great in point of space, since it is prepared throughout the world; great also in point of time, for the Lamb of God is slain and offered at all times; it is great on account of the love manifested by this banquet, than which no love could be greater.

2. "And he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready."

The first to invite us to his banquet was the Saviour himself; and in order to insure acceptance of his invitation, he threatened those who should neglect to avail themselves of it with the greatest punishment, and attached the most glorious rewards to its acceptance. "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."—"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." John vi, 54, 55, 57.

Jesus sent also his servants into the whole world to invite men to the frequent reception of Holy Eucharist.

3. What effect has this invitation had at all times? Have men flocked in crowds to this sacred table, where they would find the remedy against death, and receive life everlasting?

"And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and must needs go out and see it. I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them. I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

Let me call here your attention to two things, the excuse and the cause of the excuse.

a. When a rich man invites the poor, says St. Gregory, they hurry to follow the invitation; when God invites men, they make excuse. God invites us to Holy Communion by his Son, by his Church, by his priests; he invites us by threats and promises alike, and we make excuse. Indeed, what is more urgent than this invitation; and what is more general than an excuse?

b. As to the causes of excuse, the one has bought a farm; the other has bought five yoke of oxen; and the third has married a wife. There you have the true reasons why men so seldom receive Holy Communion; although they themselves assign quite different reasons. Some hide themselves even behind the veil of false humility. The true reason is, according to the word of Christ, attachment to the riches and pleasures of the world. Your hearts can serve only one master: either God, or the world and its prince, Satan. If your heart serves the world, the riches of the world and its sensual pleasures, you will, like the Jews in the desert, conceive a disgust for the food prepared by God himself.

c. It is certainly true, that the reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament presupposes a corresponding preparation of the heart. "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice." I Cor. xi, 27. It may be therefore, that, in the present condition of your souls, you are not worthy frequently, or even once, to receive Holy Communion. But what is the cause of this unworthiness? Does the Church demand too much? She does not. She admits frequent Communion, if you abstain from mortal sin, and from all deliberate venial sins. If you have not reached even this beginning o virtue, what is the reason? Because you are not determined to forsake a passion of your soul, a certain society, certain sensual pleasures. As those men had their hearts attached to the farm, to the yoke of oxen, to the wife, so you have your heart attached

to your sin. And why this? Because your love for the world and the things that are in the world, is greater than the love for God.

4. And now our Saviour opens his Sacred Heart, showing forth his infinite love. When the servant told his Lord these things, the master of the house was angry, because those whom he had invited preferred the pleasures of the world to their God. Yet what did he in his anger? It is to this that I invite your special attention. "He said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city: and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges: and compel them to come, that my house may be filled."

My heart is filled with sadness when I read these words. It is not astonishing that the rich, the proud, the children of the world forsake Christ, his doctrine and his table. Jesus has addressed to them the words: "Woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." Lk. vi, 24. But the Son of God extends his invitation to the poor. He preached the Gospel to the poor. He exalted the poor and despised to the dignity of children of God. He himself chose on earth the apparel and life of a poor man; he invited the king and the beggar to the same table. Nevertheless we see in our times so many of the poor forsake Jesus. False prophets arise, enemies of Christ and enemies of the people, and many of the poor trust and follow them.

Not only those who are poor in regard to earthly goods are invited by Jesus, but all who are poor as regards their soul. Come ye all that labor and are heavy laden, the Lord will refresh you. There is yet room in the house of God. The Lord sends still his servants to compel men to come in, and partake of his supper.

Hear, in conclusion, the words of Jesus: "I say to you, that none of those men that were called, shall taste my supper."

All those men who declined my invitation, who valued earthly things, and the pleasures of this world higher than me, their Lord and God, are not worthy of me. I shall deny them before my Heavenly Father, and none of them shall be found worthy to enter with me into the house of my Father and to partake of the joys of the heavenly banquet. The participation of the banquet prepared by Jesus for his disciples on earth, is a pledge of their admission to the banquet in heaven. But whoever excludes himself on earth, will be excluded hereafter, and never taste the Lord's supper. But "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him; he hath everlasting life." John vi, 57, 55.

VIII.

THE PICTURE OF ST. ALOYSIUS, CONFESSOR.

The picture of St. Aloysius is his life represented by sacred art. It represents to our minds the continual struggle of the Saint for virtue and sanctity; and exhorts us at the same time to follow his example. It is therefore both edifying and instructive to make the symbols which you see in his picture, the subject of our meditation. These symbols are:

I.

THE LILY.

It is

1. A symbol of the innocence and purity resplendent in the life of St. Aloysius. Four priests who had heard his confessions, amongst whom was the saintly Cardinal Bellarmine, declared after his death their conviction that he had never been guilty of a mortal sin. He guarded his chastity with so great solicitude, that he never looked a woman in the face, his nearest relations not excepted; and when playing with other children, he peremptorily refused to kiss the shadow of the head of a girl. He is therefore called the *angelic youth*, the *angel in flesh.*

2. A warning for us

a. To value highly the virtue of chastity. "No price is worthy of a continent soul." Ecclus. xxvi, 20. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men. When it is present, they imitate it: and they desire it when it has withdrawn itself: and it triumpheth crowned for ever, winning the reward for undefiled conflicts." Wisd. iv, 1.

b. To guard carefully this celestial treasure, by remembering the presence of God; by being temperate in regard to food and drink; by avoiding idleness, bad society, and proximate occasions of sin; and by venerating St. Aloysius, who is presented as a model for youth by the Holy Church. (The Six Sundays in honor of the Saint.)

II.

THE CROWN.

It is

1. A symbol of the Saint's contempt of the world.

a. He renounced all honors and pleasures of the world. At the court of Florence, which in splendor and luxury held the first rank among the courts of Italy, and at the court of Madrid, which held the first rank in Europe, favors were heaped upon the son of the marquis of Castiglione, and worldly dignities were awaiting him. But at the courts he lived an hermit's life, fled splendor, and renounced even his birthright.

b. He joined the Society of Jesus whose members oblige themselves not to accept high ecclesiastical dignities. His joyful readiness to renounce the world may be inferred from an answer given to a nobleman, who said to him: "Your brother," I suppose, "will rejoice at having obtained the domain in such an easy way." "No more," replied the Saint, "than I rejoice at having found some one to accept it."

2. A warning and exhortation to follow his example in despising the world. "They who use this world be as if they used

it not: for the figure of this world passeth away." I Cor. vii, 31. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." Eccle. i, 2. "The whole world is seated in wickedness." I John v, 19.

III.

THE CRUCIFIX.

It is

1. A symbol of the love of St. Aloysius for the Crucified.

a. He was deeply impressed with the greatness of the love, that moved our Saviour to lay down his life for his friends, nay for his enemies and offenders. John xv, 13. To meditate on the Crucified, to pray ardently at the foot of the Cross, was his continual and sweetest occupation. He had resolved with the Apostle "not to know anything but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I Cor. ii, 2.

b. He returned this divine love with the most ardent love. This was evidenced by his frequent tears and chastisements before the Crucifix, his vivid abhorrence of sin, the cause of Jesus' Passion and Death.

2. An exhortation for us,

a. To meditate frequently on the love of the Crucified. Let us often turn our eyes to the emblem of the Crucified, and say with St. Teresa: "My love has been crucified." The meditation on the crucified Love was to her the means of conversion.

b. To return this love by abhorrence of sin, by prayer and tears of penance, and by flying for refuge to the sacred wounds of Jesus at every temptation.

IV.

THE DISCIPLINE.

It is

1. A symbol of the rigorous mortification and penance of the Saint.

a. He used to fast rigorously three times in a week. On Fridays he ate only vegetables for his dinner, and a morsel of bread for his supper.

b. He chastised his body, by smiting himself with scourges, by using spurs in place of cilicium, by sleeping on a board which he laid secretly in his bed, and by rising for prayer at midnight, even at the most inclement season. "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." Gal. v, 24. St. Aloysius was a penitent in innocence; in him God united admirable innocence of life with equal penance.

2. An exhortation

a. To do penance; for the spirit of the Christian doctrine demands self-mortification and the carrying of the cross. Mt. xvi, 24.

b. The more, as we, being sinners, have urgent reason to do penance, to atone for our past sins, "that the body of sin may be destroyed" Rom. vi, 6, and that we may be protected from relapsing into sin, "that we may serve sin no longer." Rom. vi, 6. "For he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sins." I Pet. iv, 1.

V.

THE SKULL.

It is

1. A symbol of the Saint's frequent remembrance of death. His death in the prime of life had been revealed to him. Ever afterwards he often spoke of the grace of dying at an early age. He showed an intrepid courage in the service of those inflicted with the plague. During the last three months of his life he wished ardently with the Apostle to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, and made a zealous preparation for death.

2. An exhortation for us to remember death oftener, in order to be kept from sin. "In all thy works remember thy last end; and thou shalt never sin." Ecclus vii, 40.

Such is the meaning of the symbols in the picture of St. Aloysius. They remind us of his virtues, and exhort us to venerate and imitate the Saint. Let us follow this exhortation, and, like Aloysius, we shall be crowned with the crown of eternal glory.

A. Polhammer.

Third Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY ON THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.

The Publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus, to hear him. And as they drew near to hear him, others drew near to be healed, as the woman having an issue of blood; others, to adore him, as the Wise Men coming from the East; others, to minister unto him, as Martha; others, to overcome their infidelity, as Thomas; others, to embalm his body, as the pious women on Easter-morning. Whatsoever may lead us to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, he will listen to our petitions. For whom did he ever refuse to receive? Of all men coming to Jesus, sinners are the object of his tenderest care, as we are taught by the Parable of the lost sheep. For the sheep that went astray is the poor sinner; and the good shepherd is Jesus Christ.

I.

THE LOST SHEEP—THE SINNER.

1. Both act in the same manner.

a. The sheep, allured by a green pasture, or persecuted by enemies, separates itself from shepherd and flock, follows its own inclinations, and is seemingly happier in leading a free life, than the obedient flock.

b. The sinner forsakes God for the same reasons, separates himself from the communion of Saints, gives way to his passions, and regards himself happier than those who in obedience and self-denial follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

2. Both share the same fate.

a. Without guides as they are, how deplorable is their condition! Their paths are unknown. Sheep and sinner do not know whither they are going. The soul of the sinner is full of darkness, his understanding is blinded; he follows his natural inclinations. How tormenting is uncertainty!—Their abode is the desert. The ground on which they tread is burning sand.

Sheep and sinner are tormented with thirst. Hunger consumes them. The sinner yearns for divine truth and true happiness. But the desert produces only thorns and thistles. He finds no rest, the ever-gnawing worm, the voice of conscience, tormenting him.—He has no prospect but certain ruin. How great a misery!

b. Without protectors, both wander among their enemies—wolves and evil spirits—agitated by their own passions.—They wander on the brink of abysses—of hell. Although they may not fall, they never escape unhurt. Indeed, no enviable fate!

c. Without help, they are unable by their own efforts to make an end of their misery, and to return to the shepherd; nay they are unable to follow the shepherd who comes for their rescüe. He lays them upon his shoulders.

d. In what condition are both when they return? Deprived of wool—of all merits. Covered with filth, which can not be destroyed but by sharp remedies—by penance.—With the dangerous inclination to leave the flock again.

II.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD—JESUS CHRIST.

Whatever is said in the Parable of the good shepherd, applies to Jesus Christ.

1. He possesses a numerous flock, as Creator and as Redeemer of mankind. All things were made by the Word. He came unto his own. John i, 3, 11.

2. However numerous the flock may be, he is aware of every loss he sustains.

a. His solicitude for every one of his sheep knows no limits. Obedience to his Heavenly Father induces him to be vigilant. "This is the will of him that sent me, the Father: that all that he hath given me, I lose not thereof, but raise it up again at the last day." John vi, 39.

b. Being omniscient, he knows all dangers that may befall the flock and any of the sheep. To him are known all the abysses into which the sheep may fall, their countless adversaries, and their own blindness and weakness.

3. He leaves the ninety-nine in the desert.

a. He does not leave them through carelessness, or without protection. The faithful sheep are the dearest to his Heart. He sends his Angel to guard each of them. They rest securely within the fold of the Holy Church, which the Shepherd established in the desert of this world.

b. Our Saviour displayed a greater solicitude for the welfare of the sinner, because he is in peril of eternal ruin. He acts like a father, who has all his care concentrated upon the one son who fell dangerously sick.

4. He goes after that which was lost until he finds it.

a. Christ goes after the sinner, warning and exhorting him by the voice of conscience, by external inspirations, by the kindness with which he received sinners, when he dwelt visibly among them, by his whole life, Passion and Death.

b. Christ searches for the lost sinner, following him over abysses, through thorns, over mountains. He searches until he finds him, or until it has become impossible to find him, because he is lost in consequence of final obduracy.

5. And when he hath found the sheep,—when the sinner does not refuse to seize the hand extended toward him,

a. "He lays it upon his shoulders," facilitating the beginning of conversion by imparting abundant graces, so that the sinner is rather carried, than proceeds himself.

b. He carries the sheep home, to partake again of the communion of Saints, of the common graces distributed in the Catholic Church, in whose bosom the sick are healed, and the wounded are cared for.

c. He rejoices, and makes his friends and neighbors rejoice with him. He prepares a splendid banquet in honor of the once prodigal son, where he himself is both the host and the food. The Angels and Saints in heaven, and all men on earth of good will rejoice, extolling the mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence of the Shepherd.

May this Parable be to us a warning not to forsake our good Shepherd, and if we have forsaken him, an exhortation to return into his embrace!

VIII.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAY OF THE SACRED HEART.

Our heart is the seat of our affections, especially of our love. This is also the motive of our special veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For we venerate this sweetest Heart, because it was on earth the centre of our Saviour's love, mercy, bounty, sanctity, and sufferings; and because, in heaven, it is continually burning with love for us, and exhorting us to return the love of Jesus. Therefore the festival day of the Sacred Heart is to us

I.

A MEMORIAL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S LOVE.

We are exhorted to meditate:

1. *On the loving Heart of Jesus on earth.* Jesus was burning with love

a. To his Heavenly Father, whose honor and glory were the dearest to his Heart; thus leaving us the most perfect model of divine love and sanctity.

b. To all men, for whose salvation he descended from heaven, preached, and suffered. Let me remind you, in a special manner, of his love for children, and his compassion for the poor and sick.

c. To sinners, as we learn from the Parables of the lost sheep and of the prodigal son; also from his shedding tears over the obduracy and punishment of Jerusalem.

d. To all future generations, for whom he established his Church, instituted the holy Sacraments, and dwells day and night in the Holy Eucharist.

2. *On the sorrowful heart of Jesus.*

a. Of the greatness of the sufferings of this divine Heart, we are reminded by the Manger, circumcision, fasting, preaching; by the ingratitude, betrayal, revilings which afflicted it; by the scourging, coronation, crucifixion.

b. The intensity of his susceptibility of pain, we learn from his shedding tears, sweating blood, and feeling himself forsaken by his Heavenly Father. "The wounds of Jesus are wounds that even pierce stony hearts, and enkindle souls who are cold as ice." St. Bonaventure.

c. He did not permit his Heart to be opened until *after his death*, in order that his Passion might not be shortened as it would have been had his sacred Heart been pierced before he had breathed his last. Besides, he desired to shed the last drop of his precious Blood for us, love urging him to open all the treasures of his divine love.

3. *On the glorious Heart of Jesus.* It is represented by sacred art according to the vision of B. Margaret Alacoque, to-wit:

a. Flames of fire issue from this Heart. They signify *first* its heavenly glory, which it enjoys in common with the whole Sacred Body; *secondly*, the fire of the love that Jesus continues to bear towards men in his glorified Body. He is far from being an unfaithful friend who in prosperity would forget his poor friends.

b. The Sacred Heart is wounded with a cruel wound. As Jesus bears still the marks of his wounds on his hands and feet, so he bears in his Heart the mark of the cruel wound, (1) no longer, however, as a painful wound, but as an emblem of victory, and as an exhortation to us to suffer patiently, because the sadness of the children of God shall be changed into joy. (2) As a memorial of the Redemption, since Jesus, as our Mediator, presents his wounds to his Heavenly Father for the remission of our sins. (3) As an invitation to all pious Christians to seek consolation from, and to repose in, his Sacred Heart. (4) As a terror to all sinners. If Thomas, who had entertained unfounded doubts, was struck with terror, and fell prostrate on his knees, when Jesus showed him his wounds and his pierced Heart; how great will be the terror of the reprobate, when "they shall look on Him whom they pierced!" John xix, 37.

c. This Sacred Heart is surrounded with thorns. What is the significance of thorns surrounding a glorified heart which is not subject to sufferings? They signify the ignominy continually brought upon Jesus by sinners, on his divinity and humanity, on his doctrine and precepts, on his Church and sacraments, "crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of him." Heb. vi, 6. The making of most solemn acts of reparation for all these offences is one of the principal ends of this devotion and feast.

Who can meditate on these mysteries of the Divine Heart without profound admiration and ardent thanksgiving?

II.

AN EXHORTATION TO RETURN THIS LOVE.

Jesus did not approve in the Law of charity of the adage of the ancients: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." His demand is: "Heart for heart." "My son, give me thy heart." Prov. xxiii, 26. The demand involves:

1. *Purity of heart.*

a. Your heart cannot belong to God unless you chase sin out of it; for death and life, darkness and light, Satan and God, cannot be together in one heart. Let us therefore, like the penitent Publican, strike our breasts with a true contrition, and sincere confession. Unless your conversion proceeds from the depth of your heart, it cannot be acceptable to the Heart of Jesus.

b. Nor can your heart belong to God unless you become detached from sin, world, and flesh. God demands your whole heart; he desires to be the bridegroom of your soul; only two can enter this spiritual union. Therefore the chief commandment runs thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

2. *The sanctification of the heart.*

This is effected

a. By grace. We can never give anything to God, unless he gave it to us before. Let us therefore make frequent

use of the means of grace, of the holy sacraments, of the Sacrifice of Mass, and of prayer, that God himself may adorn our hearts according to his delight.

b. *By love*, or the most ardent desire to honor God above all things, and to enjoy his vision in the world to come. Let God be to us all in all, let him be our treasure, and let our heart be with him.

3. *The proof of love by actions.*

May we not deceive ourselves? Of what avail are all sweet suspirations and holy protestations, unless we show the sincerity of a good will? Good will ought to prove itself by deeds:

a. *In regard to God.* "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love." John xv, 10. How powerful is true love, although it be only a terrestrial love! How much more powerful is the love for the sovereign good! "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love is strong as death." Cant. viii, 6. Let us then always remember the divine presence, sacrifice all our actions to God, overcome our passions in his honor, and suffer as long as God pleases.

b. *In regard to our fellow-men.* "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." John xv, 12. The same fire of holy love that proceeds from the Sacred Heart, shining upon us, ought to shine also upon our fellow-men, that we all may be united by sacred love in this divine Heart.

Let us then raise up our eyes to the Sacred Heart as the most amiable, the most sorrowful and most glorious Heart. Let us give to our Jesus heart for heart.

Scherer.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

III.
HOMILY.

Although this day is dedicated to the victory of both Apostles, Peter and Paul, because both won the martyr's crown on the same day, yet the Holy Church, as if convinced of her inability to celebrate the triumph of both Apostles at the same time, has devoted this day in a special manner to the honor of St. Peter, as she has devoted the next day in a special manner to the honor of St. Paul. She honors, too, on this day, together with the Peter who died the Peter who never dies, but ever lives in his successors, the bishops of Rome. She celebrates her divine establishment upon this rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. This promise of the Lord is recorded in the Gospel for this festival day. It contains (1) the profession of faith by Peter, and (2) the reward for this profession.

I.
PETER'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

1. "And Jesus came into the confines of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" The Evangelist mentions the place where the event which he is to relate, occurred, in order to show its importance. We learn from the answers which the Apostles gave, that some took Jesus for John the Baptist, who, in their opinion, was risen from the dead. Herod was one of them. For he said: "It is John returned from the dead, and therefore these wonders show forth in him." Those who adhered to this opinion, were led to it by the many miracles wrought by Jesus. For they thought that a prophet who had returned from death, were endowed with extraordinary power for working miracles.

Others said, Jesus was Elias, who was, according to the general opinion of the Jewish nation, to precede the Messias. They could not imagine, that one presenting the lowly appearance that our Redeemer did, could be the Messias himself.

And others said, Jesus was Jeremias, whose freedom in denouncing the crimes of the Jews was so like the line of conduct pursued hy our Redeemer.

"Or one of the Prophets," such as Moses, Josue, Samuel.

2. The disciples who knew that all these opinions were erroneous, were now summoned to give their own opinion. "But whom do you say that I am?" Whereas all had answered to the first question, it is Simon Peter who alone answers to this one, anticipating all the rest. "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." The meaning of these words is: Thou art the true Christ, the true Prophet, Priest, and King anointed by the grace of the hypostatic union. Thou art the Son of the living God; not by adoption, like the prophets, with whom Peter contrasts him; but by nature, the only Son, begotten of the Father from all eternity. Peter calls him the Son of the *living* God, in contrast with the so-called sons of the pagan gods, who were dead idols.

Thus Peter professes the same faith as we profess to-day, the faith of the divinity of Jesus Christ, which involves the acceptance of all his teaching.

II.

THE REWARD FOR THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

1. Peter was the first to confess solemnly in clear terms the faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Our Redeemer, in return, calls him blessed, and rewards him with a great promise. "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

He calls him by his former name *Simon*, that the significance of his new name might command the more attention; and for the sake of greater solemnity he adds, *Bar-Jona*.

The meaning of the words is this: Thou art blessed on account of thy faith in my divinity, because it is the way leading to the vision of God. This faith is of divine origin, because, far

from being the result of human investigation, it is the effect of an immediate divine inspiration, a precious gift of the Heavenly Father.

Thereupon Jesus made him a solemn promise of a reward. "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter," etc. It is clear, from the grammatical construction, that "upon this rock," refers to Peter. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," i. e., the powers of hell shall not overcome the Church built upon Peter, who in these words received the supreme power in his Church.

If Peter was the rock upon which the Church was built, he could never die, because the Church, deprived of her foundation, could not exist without it. And indeed we may safely say of Peter that he ever lives in his successors, the Popes.

2. Jesus gives a yet fuller explanation of the words addressed to Peter, saying: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." In these words the supreme power or jurisdiction is granted to Peter, "keys" being always regarded as the symbols of power. To Peter our Lord promised that he would endow him with universal spiritual power and jurisdiction in His kingdom.

History confirms the promise of our Lord: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Peter lived and still lives in his successors, the bishops of Rome. Innumerable assaults have been made against this rock, but in vain.

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

The Holy Church leads us frequently to the shores of the lake of Genesareth, on which most of the Apostles lived as fishermen. Jesus often preached from a ship on this lake. On its waters he walked, stilled its turbulent waves and, as he twice multiplied the bread in the desert, so he caused twice the miraculous draught of fishes on this lake. The first miraculous draught, as it is recorded in the Gospel for this day, may, for a few moments, occupy our attention.

I.

THE SHIP.

Jesus went up into one of the ships, that was Simon's. You learn from this

1. The significance of the ship,—it is the Holy Church, Peter being the helmsman. Its mast is the holy Cross pointing toward heaven; its rudder is the holy faith; its proprietor, Jesus Christ; its helmsman, Peter, assisted by the rest of the Apostles; its rowers are the holy Angels; the passengers are the faithful. It takes its course through the turbulent sea of time; its harbor is Paradise. (Origen.) "She is like the merchant's ship; she bringeth her bread from afar," the bread of the most blessed Sacrament. Prov. xxxi, 14.

2. The security of the ship, in which Jesus overcomes the tempest. It is the saving ark during the deluge, in our agitated times. Other vessels are drowned in the depths of the sea. Only Peter's ship, although its structure demonstrates its antiquity, leads us into a secure haven, because it is governed by the vicar of Christ.

II.

THE FISHERMEN.

The Evangelists mention four, Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, James and John.

1. Jesus calls them from a low to a high vocation. "And some, indeed, he gave to be apostles, and some prophets, and others evangelists, and others pastors and teachers, for the perfection of the saints." Eph. iv, 11. Jesus chose fishermen, as St. Augustine remarks, because they do not compel the fishes by force to enter their nets, but take only those which enter voluntarily. When elevated to the dignity of Apostles, they should act after the same manner.

2. Every member of the Church is called upon to be a fisherman, winning souls for Jesus Christ, especially by a virtuous life. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood; a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his admirable light." I Pet. ii, 9.

III.

THE LABOR OF THE FISHERMEN.

1. The fruitless labor. They had labored all the night—the time most favorable to their occupation—and had taken nothing.

a. In a similar manner, the Holy Church often labors in vain for our salvation—from our cradle to our grave; but we do not heed her efforts.

b. Many a one strives for science, moral perfection, and for inner peace during many years, but all in vain.

c. What is the reason of this want of success? The Gospel intimates the reason. It is because they keep too close to the land, to the flowry shores of this world; and because preachers as well as hearers do not launch out into the deep. Religion ought not only to touch the surface of the soul, but also penetrate into her depths.

2. The successful labor.

a. Only with Jesus in the ship, and at his word, was the miraculous draught of fishes accomplished.

b. Let every one work as strenuously, as if on it all success depended; but let him put as great a confidence in God, as if all success depended on divine grace.

IV.

THE REWARD OF THE FISHERMEN.

1. The first, external and perishable, reward was the miraculous draught of fishes, that their net was breaking.

2. The better reward was their exaltation from the occupation of fishermen to the apostolate.

3. An eternal reward will be given to every one who performs his day's work in the name of the Lord.

4. We must, however, like the Apostles, leave all things, and follow Jesus.

a. This is hard, but necessary to him who desires to overcome the world.

b. This is the explanation of the great achievements in the Catholic Church, of her missions among the heathen, of her self-sacrificing charity, etc. Therefore Jesus demands of his disciples to leave all things, that is, to detach our hearts from them. For "he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Mt. x, 37.

Let us remember, that it is not sufficient for salvation to have been of the number of fishes taken into Peter's ship. For "the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kind of fishes; which when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels: but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world. The Angels shall go out, and separate the wicked from the just. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. xiii, 47.

VIII.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST A POWERFUL PREACHER.

God is the householder, who went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. Mt. xx, 1. He called forth from time to time men whom, filled with his own Spirit, he sent to the

perverse children of men, to denounce their crimes, and to point out to them the path of penance and of truth. However great the messengers of God may have been, no one of them was greater than John, whose nativity we celebrate to-day. He was a powerful preacher:

I.

BY HIS DEEDS.

1. *He fled the noisy world.*

The Spirit of God who had led Jesus into the desert, led his Precursor there too. In his infancy he left the world for the solitude of the desert:

a. In order to seek protection for his innocence, and to escape the danger of being contaminated with the corruption of the world.—Oh! renounce at least the society that has already proved dangerous for you, or that is likely to become so.

b. In order to converse with God alone.—How confounding is the example of St. John to those of you whose hearts are attached to the earth, or who confine their religion to external observances, but without zeal or unction.

c. In order to prepare himself for his grand mission, thus exhorting you and every one never to enter upon a state of life without consulting God, and without due preparation.

2. *He fled from all vain honor.*

Jesus himself gives him this testimony. "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" No, John was no reed shaken

a. With the wind of vain honor. When asked whether he was Christ or Elias or the prophet, he not only answered, "I am not," but he even hid his great dignity from those who were sent to him.—Do you accept the honor that is not due to you? Do you find no delight in hearing yourselves praised?—When asked who he was, he answered modestly: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." And you desire to be preferred by others, forgetful of the words of Holy Scriptures: "Thou sayest:

I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing: and thou knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Apoc. iii, 17.

b. With the wind of envy, so as not to be able to bear that the Messias should be preferred to him, as derogatory to his own honor. On the contrary, he says "The same is he who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose." Are you also willing that your neighbors should be preferred before you?

2. *He fled from an indolent life.*

Jesus gives him this testimony also. "What went you out to see? A man clad in soft garments?" Mt. xi, 3. John had his garment of camel's hair; his food was locusts and wild honey. He had no home but the desert, no society but that of wild beasts. How confounding is the example of the innocent penitent to the poor who murmur against God on account of their poverty, and to wealthy sinners who lead an effeminate life!

II.

BY HIS WORDS.

"The new language of St. John, who spoke only of heaven, of an eternal kingdom, and of the torments of hell, soon aroused the people, that they came to him." St. Chrysostom. We need not wonder at this, for

1. *John was a prophet.*

He foretold

a. The proximity of the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mt. iii, 2. The kingdom is at hand, the king of which came down from heaven, the citizens of which should have their conversation in heaven, for which the Jews cared so little, because they did not know it.—Do you, Christians as you are, make greater efforts to enter this kingdom, than the Jews did; or do you seek your heaven on earth, in earthly joys?

b. The vocation of the Gentiles. The Jews boasted of having Abraham for a father. John said to them: "God is able

of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Lk. iii, 8. The Gentiles who made their idols out of stone were made like to these idols. Ps. cxxxiv, 18. Our Redeemer took away from them their stony hearts and gave them hearts to feel and believe, so that they were made worthy to partake of Abraham's blessing.—Are we also worthy children of this father of the faithful?

c. The rewards and punishments in the world to come, He spoke on this subject in the parable of the householder, "whose fan is in his hand; and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Mt. iii, 12. And in the similitude of the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit. "Now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." Lk. iii, 9.

2. *John was more than a prophet.*

a. Jesus himself says of him: "What went you out to see? a prophet? yea, I tell you: and more than a prophet." Mt. xi, 9.

b. Indeed he was more than a prophet.

He pointed out to the Jews present among them the Messias, whom the prophets had foretold as one to come. John saw Jesus coming to him; and he saith: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold, he who taketh away the sin of the world." John i, 29. Take ye also away the sins of the world, the sins of your fellowmen, and your own sins?

He baptized with his own hands Him by whom he himself ought to have been baptized. He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending: was there ever a prophet who had a similar vision?—At your baptism the Holy Ghost descended also upon you. Is he still remaining on you?

He was chosen to be the most trust-worthy witness of all. "He was a burning and a shining lamp." John v, 35. He went before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elias." Lk. i, 17.

3. *John was an Angel.*

a. Jesus called him so. "This is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." Mt. xi, 10.

b. He deserved this name:

First on account of his mission. For it is quite usual for Holy Scripture to call those "*angels*" who were charged by God to exhort men to penance, and virtue, and to a worthy reception of their Saviour. John had this commission from God, and executed it faithfully. He preached the baptism of penance. "Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance." Mt. iii, 2, 8. He preached justice, reminding the rich, the Publicans, and the soldiers, of their peculiar duties. Lk. iii, 11-14.

Secondly, because of his singular purity.

St. John possessed not only himself this virtue in a conspicuous degree, but denounced also the opposite vice on the throne, saying to Herod: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Mk. vi, 18. Are you also enemies of the vice of impurity?

Let us follow the example and doctrine of St. John. We shall then promote the honor of St. John and our own salvation.

Menne.

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel for this Sunday is a part of the Lord's *sermon on the mountain*, wherein he made known the principal demands of his Law. In to-day's Gospel our Saviour gave it (1) as a general rule that Christian justice ought to abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; (2) he explained the Fifth Commandment; (3) he gave the precept of reconciliation.

I.

CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

"I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

1. Our Lord introduces the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees, because they were regarded as the most scrupulous observers of the law among the Jews. Jesus demands of his disciples a greater justice:

a. Because his Law was more perfect than the Old Law, proclaimed by Moses. The Mosaic Law was, so to say, a school which prepared mankind for a higher and worthier state. And because the end of the New Law was to elevate mankind to this higher condition; therefore it requires more from men.

b. Because greater graces responding to the greater requirements are conferred by God. For through Moses the Law has been communicated to us; through Christ, grace and truth; not as though he had not given us a Law, but because, by his strengthening grace, he made the fulfillment of his Law easier. Divine love that is poured out into our hearts, renders the yoke of the Law light, and its burden sweet. The Christian bears the burden of the Law, that the Law may bear him up, as, according to the beautiful comparison of St. Augustine, the bird bears its wings, yet so that the wings bear the bird.

c. Because the great justice that is required of us, consists in the greater love of God, which is the fulfillment of the Law. For if man was obliged to love God, under the natural Law as well as under the Mosaic Law, this obligation is far more binding under the Christian Law, when the love of God towards us appears in its full splendor.

2. In what way should Christian justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees?

a. In the regulation of the internal thoughts and feelings. The Pharisees confined their justice almost entirely to external observances, as purifications, paying tithes, fastings, dishonoring God in their heart, whilst they honored him with their lips.

b. In observing the Law merely to the letter. They observed scrupulously the religious usages and ceremonies, but trespassed grievously the most important commandments, such as the commandments of charity and mercy.

Christian justice should be free from these imperfections. Above all, our heart itself ought to be just, united with God in holy charity; for from the heart evil thoughts proceed, adultery, fornication, etc. Unless our heart is good, animated with the love of God, all our external observances of the Law are in vain.

On the other hand, Christian justice abounds more also in external deeds, so that the true Christian regards every precept of the Law as being of importance, and avoids all wilful transgressions. For those who are indifferent to venial sins are making the way easy to the commission of mortal ones.

Our Saviour proceeds to illustrate the high standard of Christian justice by explaining the Fifth Commandment.

II.

EXPLANATION OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be guilty of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his

brother, shall be guilty of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire."

Our Redeemer declares solemnly as legislator ("I say to you") that everyone who hates his brother is guilty of the highest punishment. He distinguishes three degrees of hatred: to hate our brother in our heart; to speak angry words to him; to inflict on him contumelies. And for each degree our Saviour assigns a particular punishment: the judgment, the council, hell fire.

1. "Whoever is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of the judgment." "Angry" conveys the state of strong, passionate resentment and excitement, desiring (as is implied by the subject matter) to deprive our neighbor of life, or inflict on him grievous bodily harm. Such a one shall be liable to capital punishment, that is to say, shall sin mortally and incur eternal death, just as the internal desire of adultery, though punishable by no earthly tribunal, entails grievous mortal guilt.

2. "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty of the council." *Raca*, means a vile, contemptible, brainless wretch. This involves a greater amount of guilt and a heavier mortal sin than the mere internal feelings of anger. And as the council of Seventy-two took cognizance, among the Jews, of the public crimes against religion and state, so this crime of anger is as punishable before God as the greatest crimes are before men.

3. "And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire." To call a man *fool*, was among the Jews the greatest insult. It involved a charge of impiety and irreligion; since impiety was regarded as folly of the greatest kind. The due punishment for such a contumely is, according to the words of our Saviour, so grievous that nothing can be compared to it but the burning in the unceasing fire of Gehenna.

This Gehenna was a valley near Jerusalem, where the Israelites, imitating the impiety of the Chanaanites, had erected

an altar and burnt their own children as victims to Moloch (Ps. cv, 38). After their return from the Babylonish captivity, the Israelites so abominated this place, that, following the example of the pious king Josias (IV Kings xxiii, 10), they cast the carcasses of the dead and all the filth of the city into it; and as a perpetual fire was needed to consume all this offal, it was termed the *Gehenna of fire.*

III.

THE PRECEPT OF RECONCILIATION.

After having enjoined the obligation of avoiding a violation of fraternal charity, and having exposed the punishment which such violation shall entail, he now proceeds to infer the necessity of being reconciled speedily with your brother, who has anything against you.

"Therefore if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother; and then come and offer thy gift."

"What is more delightful than these words? Let my worship, says the Lord, be interrupted, that thy charity may be continued; let the reconciliation with thy brother be the sacrifice." St. Chrysostom.

1. In the above words of the Lord it is worthy of notice, that our Redeemer does not say: Before thou offerest thy gift, or, After thou hast offered, but, If thou offerest thy gift at the altar, by which words it is intimated, that in order to be reconciled to our brother, even the sacrifice is to be interrupted—the interruption of the sacrifice being regarded even in the opinion of Gentiles, as utterly inadmissible. Besides it is intimated that we should seek reconciliation without delay. "Let not the sun go down upon your anger." Eph. iv, 26.

2. It is also significant, that our Redeemer says: "If thou shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee." For, not only when you have anything against your brother, and bear enmity against him in your heart, but also when you know

that he has something against you, because, by your words or actions, you may have given him occasion of hatred, you ought to go to him, although, as St. Augustine remarks, not with your bodily feet, yet with the affections of your soul, showing him your love, and your sorrow because of having offended him.

3. The word *brother* involves the most efficacious motive of reconciliation. He whom you have offended and wounded with the edge of your words, is not a stranger to you, but partakes of the same dignity, and entertains the same hopes with you; he is like you a child of God, whose image he bears, and whom you offend by offending him.

The greatest motive for reconciliation is the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the sacrifice of reconciliation. For it is the same as the Sacrifice on the Cross. The partaking of this holy Sacrifice is called holy Communion, because by virtue of it we are united both with God and with our brethren. "For we being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread." I Cor. x, 17. Therefore the greatest outrage inflicted on this mystery of charity is to receive it with an uncharitable, implacable heart. Not only would you be unworthy in such a state of heart to receive holy Communion, but even to assist at the tremendous Sacrifice: you would profane the place where it is immolated. Oh! that we would imitate the charity of the early Christians when they were gathered together to break the Eucharistic bread!

VIII.
THE FEAST OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.
(First Sunday in July.)

"Converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver * * * but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 18.

Pope Pius IX, when in Gaeta, the place of his exile, in 1949, solemnly instituted the feast of the Precious Blood, for the first

Sunday in July. That most sacred stream is the price of our redemption, and is poured out daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whence it streams into the channels of the seven Sacraments, as atonement for our sins, and for our sanctification. For, as in Egypt God was propitiated by the blood of the Paschal lamb, the figure of the true Lamb of God, so is He propitiated by the blood of his Son, the true Paschal Lamb; "which speaketh better than Abel." Heb. xii, 24. Herein is the strongest evidence of the infinite love of Jesus Christ, who not only once, but seven times, shed his precious Blood amidst the most cruel sufferings for our salvation. Let this seven-fold shedding of the Precious Blood be the subject of our present meditation.

1. *The circumcision.*

a. When our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, the Holy Angels announced him as our Redeemer, without intimating, however, in what manner he was to redeem the world. Eight days later, Jesus himself revealed this mystery of blood by his circumcision. As the rosy morn announces an evening rain, so this rosy morn of circumcision means nothing else than that his Blood, in the evening of his life, is to flow, like rain, out of all the veins of his Sacred Body.

b. The first shedding of the Precious Blood is an exhortation to us to serve Jesus from our earliest childhood. If he shed his blood, when a mere Infant, is it not becoming that we should devote to his service the years of our childhood? But alas! we have urgent reason to exclaim with David: "The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember." Ps. xxiv, 7. Let us repent of the many sins of our childhood, and let us at least henceforth lead a penitent life.—Ye Christian parents, you possess a special means of atoning for the sins of your youth, by educating your children for Jesus and his holy love.

2. *The shedding of blood in the garden Olivet.*

"And being in an agony he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."

a. The love of Jesus for us was so great, that he would not wait for the scourges, thorns and nails; but, as the myrrh sends forth its precious oil through its foliage before its bark is cut, so his infinite love and his desire to redeem us urged him to shed for us his innocent Blood, in the garden Olivet, as a sacrifice of propitiation. It was also the most painful of all his sufferings; for it was not caused by external bodily wounds, but by the agony of his soul. Jesus anticipated in it his entire Sacred Passion, which was vividly represented before his eyes. When the death agony is very severe, you notice, with heart-felt compassion, large drops of sweat on the brow and face of the dying. But there was never heard of a dying man who sweat drops of blood. Our Saviour alone exhibited this sign of mortal anguish at the moment when he commenced his Sacred Passion.

b. A legend mentioned by Hegesippus says, that on every place where a drop of Jesus' blood trickled down, a flower sprung up. Spiritually explained, this legend is literally true. The meditation on our Saviour's shedding blood in the garden is the fruitful seed of virtue. Can you be so cruel as to again offend Jesus by sins, when you remember his sadness of spirit and his agony caused by our sins, which was so vehement, that he sweat blood? Or can you be indifferent as to your own salvation, and persevere in an impenitent spirit, when you reflect that the remembrance of his Sacred Passion being fruitless in regard to many sinners because of their obduracy made the Son of God sweat blood? O Jesus! through thine agony we beseech thee, give us abundant grace to lead holy lives, and console us in our agony by pointing out to us the beauty of our heavenly home!

3. *Jesus is scourged.*

a. The four Evangelists narrate that Jesus was scourged before his death. The Jews were forbidden by law to inflict more than forty strokes. The Romans had no number of stripes fixed by law. That Jesus was scourged after the manner of the Romans is evident from the fact that it was a Roman judge who

passed sentence upon Jesus, as also from the words of Jesus: "They shall deliver the Son of man to the Gentiles to be mocked, and to be scourged, and to be crucified." Mt. xx, 19. This punishment, as inflicted by the Romans, was one of excessive cruelty. Many expired before it was finished. An ancient writer says, that, in consequence of it, the bones were laid open, and even the bowels became visible. As Pilate, by the punishment of scourging, intended to move the Jews to compassion, it is to be inferred that it was inflicted on Jesus with the utmost cruelty.—The prophets who saw in spirit our scourged Saviour, say of him, that from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness: wounds and bruises and swelling sores. Isai. i, 6. They say that there was no beauty in him, nor comeliness; that they thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. liii, 2-5.—Our Saviour was so cruelly scourged, that even Pilate, the heartless Gentile, cried out at the pitiful sight: "Ecce homo."

b. St. Bridget, when a child of ten years, saw in a vision our Saviour being scourged. The good child, moved with compassion, said: "Who has disfigured thee thus?" Jesus answered: "Not only the Jews have done it, but all those who despise my love." And who are these? Especially those Christians who do not endeavor to restrain the passions of their flesh. If your conscience reproaches you with having scourged your Redeemer anew by committing such heinous sins, amend the outrage by a virtuous and penitent life. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof." Rom. vi, 11. "Mortify your members which are upon the earth." Col. iii, 5. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."

4. *Jesus shed his Blood the fourth time when he was crowned with thorns.*

a. The Evangelist Matthew (xxvii, 27-30) relates this cruel coronation in the following manner: "Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band: and stripping him, they put a scarlet

cloak about him. And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head." Mt. xxvii, 27-30. The adorable head of Jesus had thus its own peculiar sufferings. The coronation was as ignominious as it was painful: ignominious, because in order to jeer at his pretensions, they put a crown of thorns upon his head; painful, because, in consequence of the many strokes, the thorns pierced his head.

b. This coronation is to us an earnest exhortation to banish all proud and ambitious thoughts from our minds. Jesus crowned with thorns says to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Mt. xi, 29. "Far be it from me," said St. Elizabeth of Hungary, "that I, a poor creature as I am, should appear with a bright crown upon my head before my God and Saviour, who, being king of heaven and earth, wore a crown of thorns." And she declined to enter the church in such adornment.

5. *Jesus carrying the Cross.*

a. On his way to Golgotha Jesus shed abundantly his Precious Blood in consequence (1) of the changing of the garment; (2) of his falling to the ground; (3) of the strokes inflicted on him by the soldiers and executioners; (4) of the heavy burden of the cross wounding his shoulder.

b. The Precious Blood which Jesus shed when carrying the Cross points out to us the way that leads us to heaven. It is no other way than that which he trod before us, the way of the Cross. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24. Both the sinner and the just man must tread this bloody way; the sinner, because without mortification he is not able to overcome his passions; the just, because without self-denial it is impossible to resist the many temptations with which all are assailed, and to make progress in virtue. Let us all tread this royal way of the cross. Let us suffer with Jesus, that we also may be glorified with him. Rom. viii, 17.

6. *The shedding of the Precious Blood at the crucifixion.*

a. "Bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him." John xix, 18. Who is able to describe the torments of our own Jesus, when he was nailed to the Cross, and hung thereon, supported by his own wounds? "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Lam. i, 12.

b. "I need no other evidence to convince me how grievous an evil sin must be. I know sufficiently from the nature of the medicine the nature of my wound; and the remedy being so painful, I see clearly how dangerous my disease was. God himself, the holy and innocent God, would suffer in his human nature for the sins that we regard so little; for the guilty pleasures which we enjoy so easily God himself would die the death, the most ignominious death of the cross." St. Bernard.

7. *The shedding of the Precious Blood from the wound of the Sacred Heart.*

a. "When the soldiers came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs: but one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear: and immediately there came out blood and water." John xix, 33. Blood and water came out as an evidence that these were the last drops of the Sacred Blood. Thus it is literally true, that our Redeemer shed the last drop of blood for us. We are reminded of this infinite charity of Jesus by the separate consecration of bread and wine in Holy Mass.

b. Let us return the love of Jesus by devoting to him all the affections of our heart. Let us give him a proof of our love by fulfilling his divine will. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me." John xiv, 21.

The Covenant between God and the Israelites was sealed with blood. (Exodus xxiv, 8.) The New Covenant was sealed with the Precious Blood of the Son of God. Seven times did

our Saviour shed his Precious Blood, and the virtue thereof he reposed in the seven holy sacraments. This covenant between God and men is sealed again as many times as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up to God. Renew, therefore, on this feast in honor of the Precious Blood, your resolutions to assist whenever you can at the tremendous Sacrifice of the Mass, and frequently to receive the holy sacraments.

J. E. Zollner.

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

Our Redeemer twice multiplied bread in a miraculous manner. The Holy Church orders the Gospel which relates the first miracle to be read on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, because it is the time at which all good Christians make their preparation for holy Easter communion. The other miracle is read to us at a time when the fields, at the command of God, have brought forth the necessary grain for the support of men and of all living creatures—the ordinary multiplication of bread. I intend to explain the Gospel for this Sunday by calling your attention to the divers persons mentioned in it, and to their words and actions.

I.

CHRIST THE LORD, WHO MULTIPLIED THE BREAD.

We must, throughout the life on earth of Jesus, distinguish between those deeds which he performed as man, and those deeds which he performed as God. We must bear this in mind in our reflections on the Gospel of to-day.

1. *What was it which Jesus did as man?*

a. As man, he had compassion on his fellow-men, because they had nothing to eat. "I have compassion on the multitude:

for, behold, they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way."—We also should compassionate our needy fellow-men; we should imitate the example of Jesus in having compassion on our brethren who are also children of God. "He that has the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall set his bowels against him; how doth the charity of God abide in him?" I John iii, 17.

b. He shows his kindness and friendship by apparently consulting his disciples as to what could be done for the welfare of the multitude. How amiable and edifying a humility! How confounding to that pride of ours, which makes us sometimes fancy that we are too wise and prudent to need the advice of others! It is no disgrace for a husband to take counsel with his wife about things concerning the family, nor for a master to take counsel with his subject, nor for a rich man to take counsel with a poor man.

c. Before he gave the loaves to his disciples to set them before the multitude, *he gave thanks* to his Heavenly Father. He did so as man; for as God he was, like the Father, the dispenser of all good gifts. Holy Scripture never mentions that Jesus distributed bread among the people, without saying expressly that he gave thanks. Is not this an exhortation never to omit our prayer before and after meals? Men ought to distinguish themselves from the brute creation in regard to eating and drinking too.

2. *What was it that Jesus did as God?*

a. He commanded the people to sit down on the ground; he blessed the loaves and fishes. And his blessing multiplied seven loaves and a few fishes, so that four thousand men were filled, and more was left in fragments than his disciples had set before the multitude.

b. You admire the power of God, who wrought so great a miracle. But does not the ordinary dispensation of Divine Providence in giving food to his creatures deserve the same ad-

miration? Is it not a work as stupendous as the greatest miracle that God feeds daily so many millions of living creatures? Are his bounty, wisdom, and power, less worthy of adoration, when he multiplies the grain, from year to year, that it may sustain the life of men?

II.

THE DISCIPLES WHO DISTRIBUTED THE BREAD.

1. The answer which they gave to their Master is not altogether edifying. "From whence," they said, "can anyone satisfy them with bread in the wilderness?" Why did they not remember the great miracle by which He whom they followed had fed five thousand men on five loaves and two fishes? Had they not on that occasion collected twelve baskets full of fragments?

Far more blameworthy is the conduct of those who are always in fear concerning the future. "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on." Mt. vi, 25.

2. On the other hand, the disciples gave us an edifying example immediately and cheerfully setting to work to distribute the bread among four thousand men and women, children not being counted—a troublesome work indeed. Let us never cease doing charitable works, nor complain of the many applications made to our charity. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

III.

THE MULTITUDE WHO ATE THE BREAD.

They were

1. *Religious people.* In order to follow Jesus Christ, to see his miracles, to hear his sermons, and to provide for the salvation of their souls, they had had left their houses, stayed three days in the desert, forgetful of the necessities of life, and would have stayed yet longer, unless the Lord had sent them away. It is people of this description whom our Lord supplied with bread by a miracle. It is with good reason that Jesus taught us in the

Lord's Prayer to pray for our daily bread. Why are so many families in need? Because religion is banished from under their roof. They forsake God—is it wonderful that God forsakes them also?

2. *Contented people.* They did eat, and were filled. They had no delicacies; but sitting on the ground, they were content with barley loaves and fish. Let us learn from them to be content with what the Lord may give us; and let us be content with our state of life. Contentedness alone will make us happy.

3. *Industrious people.* When the Lord had sent them away, they all went home to resume their usual occupations. They departed to earn, as before, their daily bread by their own exertions, although they had eaten a miraculous bread.—Let us not expect miracles from our Lord, but earn our daily bread by earnest labor. "Man is born to labor, and the bird to fly." Job v, 7. "When we were with you, we declared this to you; that if any man will not work, neither let him eat." II Thess. iii, 10.

VIII.

THE GRACIOUS ACTIVITY OF THE HIDDEN JESUS.

(*Feast of the Visitation.*)

The mystery of this day presents to our spiritual eyes four personages: Jesus, Mary, John and Elizabeth. Jesus, although hidden in his mother's womb, is in spiritual communion with every one of them, teaching thus the great mystery of Christianity, that all those who desire to lead a virtuous life and to come to heaven, can attain neither the one nor the other, except by a spiritual union with Jesus Christ. Let us now consider the great blessing which their union with the hidden Jesus bestowed upon Elizabeth, John and Mary.

I.

JESUS GAVE HUMILITY TO ELIZABETH.

1. Humility, that is acknowledgment of our own nothingness, is the first tribute to be paid by the creature to the Crea-

tor, when he deigns to approach his creature—the first sentiment that his grace inspires at his approach. So it was with Peter who when Jesus went into his ship, "fell down at his feet, saying: Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Lk. v, 8. So it was with the centurion, who said: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." Mt. viii, 8.

2. St. Elizabeth paid this tribute at the approach of Jesus, saying: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Lk. i, 43. These words contain also the motives of her self-humiliation, to-wit:

a. The great honor of the visit: for she knows that the mother of her Lord comes to her.

b. Her own unworthiness: "Whence is this to me?" She does not understand what could make her worthy of so great an honor, and therefore she humbles herself the more.

3. We should also with profound humility approach God; for we have the same motives:

a. The infinite divine majesty, and our own nothingness. God is the supreme, sovereign, good. And we are so needy, so poor. Now if, notwithstanding our poverty and misery, God visits us by his inspirations and graces, dare we, poor creatures that we are, exalt ourselves by pride? On the contrary we should confess with all humility: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" Ps. viii, 5.

b. God's infinite bounty, and our own sinfulness. We possess nothing that could render us worthy of his mercy. In his infinite bounty he prevents us by his grace, as he prevented his Precursor. The beginning, continuance and perfection of the work of our salvation are all effected by divine grace.

4. We appear before God worthy of his graces, by deeming ourselves unworthy of them. God confesses himself our debtor if we acknowledge that he does not owe us anything. Jesus did not hesitate to go under the roof of the centurion, who deemed himself unworthy of receiving him. Peter who confessed his sinfulness, when Jesus went into his ship, is chosen to be helms-

man of the ship of the Church. Paul, who said, "I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be an apostle" (I Cor. xv, 9), was made the *Vessel of election*. God chose John who did not regard himself worthy to loose the latchet of the Saviour's shoes, to be the friend of the Bridegroom (John iii, 29); and Jesus is baptized by him.

Thus humility prepares the soul for union with Jesus.

II.

JESUS FILLED JOHN WITH AN ARDENT DESIRE TOWARD GOD.

1. Desire toward God is the second affection of a soul that seeks God. The motive of this desire is his infinite goodness and amiability. "This God desires that we should desire him; and, what seems scarcely credible, he thirsteth in his abundance." St. Gregory Nazianzen.

2. This ardent desire made St. John leap in his mother's womb, at the approach of his Lord and God.

3. Let us learn from St. John to entertain an ardent longing for Jesus; and to this end let us invoke St. John, whose office it is to inspire us with desire for Jesus. For he came for a witness, to bear witness of the light.

4. How great is our ingratitude if we do not long for Jesus!

a. When our Saviour was yet afar and hidden, he was ardently longed for. "My soul has thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come, and appear before the face of God?" Ps. xli, 3. John leaped for joy and for desire toward the hidden Saviour.

b. As for us, Jesus is in our midst, on our altars. Let us, hungry and thirsty as we are, approach the mysterious Communion-table; let us long for Jesus, and only for Jesus.

III.

JESUS IMPARTS THE SWEETEST PEACE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1. Peace in the possession of Jesus is the crown of God's work in the human soul.

2. Mary rejoices in this peace, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Lk. i, 46. Mary assigns in her *Magnificat* three motives of peace and joy, so that this sublime canticle contains three parts:

a. She makes mention of the graces which she had received from God. "He has regarded the humility of his handmaid * * * He that is mighty has done great things to me. He hath showed might in his arm."

God always looks down in charity and grace upon souls who fear him. "Say to my soul: I am thy salvation." Ps. xxxiv, 3. "If God be for us, who is against us?" Rom. viii, 31. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid." Ps. xxvi, 1.

b. She speaks of the contempt of the world and its false glory. "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble."

Mary looks down upon the world and the glory thereof from an elevated point of view. How little appear to her all earthly things!

All pious souls see the world from the same elevation; they regard the last end of all earthly goods.

The children of the world exalt earthly happiness as the supreme good. But their language is not that of the children of God, not that of the fatherland, but the language of the land of exile. (II Esd. xiii, 24.) "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." Ps. xxxii, 12.

c. Mary exalts God's faithfulness in his promises. "He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy; as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever."

God sent the Saviour indeed, and thus proved his faithfulness and truthfulness.

He will give us also the eternal beatitude which he promised us.

Such is the mysterious working of the hidden Godman upon the three holy personages in to-day's Gospel. Similar is the working of the divine Word upon our soul, with whom He will enter upon the most intimate union, and whom He prepares for this union by humility, and inflames with holy desire for it, perfecting it by the repose and peace of the soul in the possession of the supreme good. Bossuet.

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

Our Lord in to-day's Gospel warns his disciples to beware of false prophets. He meant by them all those who pretend to a special mission confided to them by God; as well as all who teach error instead of truth,—the seducers of the people. He (1) describes their intrinsic value; (2) reveals their characteristics; and (3) speaks of their final punishment.

I.

THE INTRINSIC NATURE OF THE FALSE PROPHETS.

1. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." Our Saviour understands by *false prophets* those who pretend to an extraordinary mission from God; but in fact are self-sent, without any commission from God or his Church; like the men of whom the Lord speaks: "I did not send prophets; yet, they ran: I have not spoken to them; yet, they prophesied." Jerem. xxiii, 21. They preach error, not the truth; they are not instructors, but seducers of the people.

2. They put on an external garb of sanctity, in order the more effectually to ruin the souls of the people, "and draw disciples after them from the truth." Acts xx, 29. Heretics generally assume a sanctimonious appearance, both in words and manner, in order to deceive the unwary and lead them away from the faith.

II.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETS.

"By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree yieldeth bad fruit. A good tree cannot yield bad fruit; neither can a bad tree yield good fruit."

The *fruits* by which the false prophets may be distinguished, are:—

1. Their teaching being at variance with the unchangeable doctrines revealed by God, and deposited in the safe keeping of his Church; and their doctrine differing from the doctrine of that Church with whom Christ promised to remain himself, and deposit within her the fullness of truth through his Holy Spirit to the end of ages. Mt. xxviii, 20. John xiv, 16-26.

2. Their personal conduct and morals, as well as the consequences resulting from the principles which they disseminate. Their own wicked actions, and those of their adherents, will sooner or later display the concealed wolf. The history of all heresiarchs, and the influence of their teaching, both in regard to civil and ecclesiastical authority, confirms the words of our Saviour. Their fruits are also the works of the flesh, referred to by St. Paul Gal. v, 19, such as "dissensions, envies, contentions," which show their true character, whereas "charity, peace, joy," shall be a mark of good teachers.

III.

THE PUNISHMENT AWAITING THE FALSE PROPHETS.

1. The punishment awaiting the false prophets and all seducers is expressed in these words: "Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." A bad man cannot do good works *ordinarily;* as a good man does not ordinarily do bad works. So the wicked teacher must sometimes bring forth from the abundance of his wicked heart fruits by which he may be safely judged and discerned from the good.

As a tree that yieldeth not good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire; so God will take away from this place of probation the false teachers, and condemn them to everlasting fire. Neither their hypocrisy, nor their good works which they sometimes do, in order to deceive others about their real character, will save them from eternal ruin. For in order to be saved, it is not enough to say: Lord, Lord. "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

2. Let those tremble who hope for salvation because of certain devotions, although they are addicted to impurity, drunkenness, injustice, or other vices. Prayer alone will not save you; you must also do the will of your Father in all things. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." James ii, 10. On the other hand, let those Christians who cannot find so much time for prayer as they wish to, take consolation from the words: "He that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." The will of the Father is, that you should fulfill the duties of your state of life. Therefore educate your children in the fear of the Lord, because God wills it. Do your menial works for the love of God, and you will be saved.

Let us, in conclusion, firmly resolve, *first* to do many good works, without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. "Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." *Secondly* let us make the firm resolution to beware of all seducers, of false prophets. Parents, guard the innocence of your children.

VIII.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SCAPULAR.

In order to form a fair judgment about the confraternity of the Scapular, we should avoid two extremes. *First* we should not undervalue it. It has its foundation in an apparition of the

Blessed Virgin, who, on that occasion, made great promises and gave the scapular as a pledge of her promises. The fact that a great Saint bears witness to the truth of this vision, that many Popes warranted it by their authority, that the confraternity spread throughout the whole Christian world and has been flourishing for more than six centuries, takes away all reasonable doubt respecting these wonderful promises of the Blessed Virgin. On the other hand, we should not overvalue the scapular. You will not be saved by merely wearing the scapular; nor by being a member of the confraternity, without leading a Christian life. But you will be saved if the scapular is to you an efficacious exhortation to avoid sin and strive for virtue; so that, as regards this sign of your love toward the purest Virgin, you may fulfill the exhortation of Holy Scripture: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm." Cant. viii, 6. We avoid the above extremes if we bear in mind (1) that the confraternity confers upon us many blessings; and, (2) that it imposes upon us grave duties.

I.

THE BLESSINGS.

1. We have good reason to expect great blessings from the scapular:

a. Because, by wearing it, we pay homage to the Blessed Virgin. By joining the confraternity of the scapular you make the solemn declaration that you have chosen Mary for your mother and special protectress, that you are resolved to honor her as such for lifetime, and, as a pledge of this resolution, to wear this blessed habit of the children of Mary. As it is said of the Lord: "The Lord knoweth his own," so we may say: "Mary knoweth her own," those who have consecrated themselves to her service. She will not leave unrewarded such homage and confidence—her charity, mercy, and power secure the reward.

b. Because Mary obliged herself in plain words, to take

those who wear the scapular under her special protection. She said to St. Simon Stock: "Behold the sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger, the covenant of peace and everlasting alliance."

Let us then expect a great blessing from the devotion to this sacred habit. If the mantle of Elias gives to Eliseus the power of working miracles,—how much more will God look down with complacency upon those who, by the blessed scapular, profess to be children of Mary!

2. What blessings and privileges may we expect from this devotion? Besides partaking in the prayers and good works of the members of this confraternity, and gaining many indulgences, we hope for those blessings and graces connected with the veneration of the Blessed Virgin in general, and for those promises in particular that were made to those who wear the scapular. They are principally:

a. A special protection of the Mother of God, above all against all enemies of our salvation, help in temptations, and the obtaining of many graces; also a special protection in bodily dangers, as experience teaches; the most tender protection at the hour of death, when Mary will not forsake her children but will come to their succour with the Angels and Saints to guard them against the persecution of the devil, and will implore Jesus to save them from eternal ruin; at last in Purgatory, where she will console them, and shorten their time of punishment, provided they have obtained, by fulfilling the required conditions, a claim to this blessed privilege. Therefore we apply to a soul, in regard to the scapular, the words of Holy Scripture: "Strength and beauty are her clothing: and she will laugh in the latter day." Prov. xxxi, 25.

b. A great hope of election. Although it is impossible to know with certainty our election, yet there are certain signs by which we may foreknow, with great probability, our future fate. As one of these signs may be considered the scapular, if worn with the right intention; for it is (1) a manifestation of our ven-

eration of the Blessed Virgin, which was ever considered as a sign of election; (2) it has the express promises of the Mother of God, which will certainly be fulfilled, unless we frustrate them by our own wicked actions; (3) it affords special means of grace, it entitles us not only to the above privileges, but also prompts us to a holy life, the most necessary condition of election.

II.

THE DUTIES.

The scapular and the membership of this confraternity are

1. A yearning for piety. For the blessed habit exhorts us

a. To imitate Mary. As we, by baptism, have put on Jesus Christ, and thus have become children of God, and heirs of heaven (Gal. iii, 26-29), but only under the express condition, that we follow Jesus Christ, showing ourselves worthy of him; so we may say in the words of St. Bonaventure: "Put on Mary, all ye who love her; let her shine in your morals, in your works." Put the scapular as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. Let this blessed habit be to us a continual warning to wear her image in our heart, to keep her example before our eyes, and to be ever mindful of our covenant with Mary.

b. To be worthy members of this confraternity. To join a confraternity that pursues such a good end, that counts so many pious persons among its members, is no doubt a holy undertaking. Who can join such a society without being resolved to lead a Christian life?

2. A means of attaining piety. Application of the passage: "My soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; and with the robe of justice he hath covered me." You take this blessed habit not only as an assurance of "salvation," but also as an auxiliary in your efforts to do "justice." The one is inseparable from the other.

a. Mary obtains for her clients salvation insofar as she is anxious to acquire for them abundantly the means of justice: inspirations, consolations, help in temptation, and all kinds of graces.

b. The confraternity gives you no title either to indulgences, or to a participation in its prayers and good works except under the condition that your heart be contrite and penitent, and that you perform various pious works.

3. *No charter of vice and impenitency.* To commit sins presumptuously on the ground of the promise made by Mary, that those who wear the scapular, should not be tormented by the eternal fire, would be the utmost perversity and ruinous folly. For it would be in contradiction

a. With the general principles of Christian doctrine. These are: (1) Sin and impenitency are punished with the fire of hell. (2) Although the merits of Jesus Christ, his graces and sacraments, are of infinite value, yet even these save only those who co-operate with them. And is the scapular of greater efficacy and saving power than, for instance, Holy Communion? (3) Christianity insists on the amelioration of the heart, and repudiates mere external appearances. As Jesus acted in regard to the Pharisees, so he acts still in regard to all hypocrites.

b. With the nature of this confraternity, whose object is, not to give a license to sin, but to train pious children of Mary. Therefore, he who, although being a member of this society, does not endeavor to forsake sin and vice, acts in opposition to the end of this confraternity. He is dishonest by having his name enrolled among the reverers of the Mother, although he despises the Son. Besides, confraternities enjoin voluntary practices and exercises. But he who does not do the works which he is obliged to do, how can he expect to be saved by his voluntary works?

c. With the position of the Blessed Virgin in regard to the salvation of men. It is blasphemy to believe that Mary could save him whom God is obliged by virtue of his holiness to condemn, and that she would recognize as her clients those who are unwilling to follow either the example of Jesus or her own. If a vicious Christian were to appeal to the scapular, would not Satan sneeringly put the question to the Blessed Virgin: "See whether it be thy Son's coat or no? A beast hath devoured him." Gen. xxxvii, 32, 33.

When little Samuel, girded with a linen ephod, ministered before the face of the Lord, "his mother made him a little coat, which she brought to him on the appointed days, when she went up with her husband, to offer the solemn sacrifice." I Kings ii, 18, 19. This little coat reminded Samuel of his mother who loved him so tenderly, and of the purpose for which she had made it, to-wit, to minister in it before the face of the Lord. Let the scapular be to us also a souvenir of our Mother, who loves us so tenderly, but at the same time let us be mindful of the purpose for which our Mother gave it us, viz., that in it we might minister before the face of the Lord, that is to say, that we might do his holy will, and preserve purity of soul and body.

Houdry.

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

Jesus himself makes the application of this parable, saying: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." In these words the explanation of the parable is given, our Lord intending by it to exhort those who possess earthly goods, to use them as means of their own salvation, by giving alms to the poor. The lesson inculcated in this having been thus made known to us by its divine author, let us proceed to meditate on its several details. Our attention is seized by the justice and mercy of the "rich man."

I.

HIS JUSTICE.

The justice of the "rich man," in his judgment of the unjust steward, is exhibited (1) in the accusation. (2) In the examination. (3) In the sentence.

1. "There was a certain rich man, who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods."

a. The *rich man* is God himself, whose is the earth and its fullness. The *steward* is every man whom God has blessed with temporal goods. God is the real proprietor, man is only his steward; he therefore has to give an account of his stewardship. If men did not consider themselves independent owners of their goods, and did not act upon this perverse supposition, the unrighteous communistic theory would not have met with such success amongst the poorer classes, and *pauperism*, unknown to our forefathers even by name, would not have become the alarming evil it has, threatening the very existence of order and of social life. Whatever means men may employ to remedy this fatal disease of modern communities, will fail until the Christian doctrine is once more recognized, that men are only stewards of God in regard to their possessions and have to render to Him an account of their stewardship.

The same may be said of all our goods: our body and soul, and all supernatural goods.

b. The steward was accused unto his Lord, that he had wasted his goods. Who are those that accuse us unto God? The good as well as the evil spirits. The angels are like those servants who told their Lord all that was done. Mt. xviii, 31. The devil is called "the accuser of our brethren." Apoc. xii, 10. Our accusers are also our heinous sins, as the murder of Cain, and the impurity of the Sodomites cried to God from the earth. Gen. iv; xviii. Another of our accusers is our own conscience, for, as St. Paul says, the thoughts of men within themselves accuse them, or else defend them. Rom. ii, 15.

2. The accusation is succeeded by the examination. "And he called him and said to him: What is this I hear of thee? give an account of thy stewardship." The Lord acted according to justice, as he would not pass sentence before he had heard the defence of him who was accused unto him.

The just God did not condemn us immediately after we had become unfaithful to him; but he gave us a hearing, by sum-

moning us, and reminding us of our ingratitude in this time of grace. The good inspirations which have visited us, whether they come from God or from our holy angel; the salutary warnings we have received from our confessors, parents, and our good friends; the many afflictions that have befallen us; what were they but messengers sent by God, through whom he says to us: "What is this I hear of thee? give an account of thy stewardship?"

Let us not wait to give an account until God calls us before his judgment-seat in the next world; for there will be no more time to amend what you have done amiss. As God summons us now in many ways, "Give an account of thy sewardship," let us examine our conscience, whether we have kept the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church; whether we have performed good works, such as praying, fasting and alms-giving. How do you train your children? How do you spend your time, your money? What use do you make of divine grace? "Give an account of thy stewardship."

3. The unfaithful steward could not give an account. Upon examination it was found that he had wasted the goods of his Lord. Therefore the latter pronounced the dreadful, but just, sentence against him: "Now thou canst not be steward."

How terrible, O just God, is this sentence to all those who have not served thee faithfully! To be removed, discarded, disowned, was the fate of the steward; and the same fate may be ours. If we dissipate the graces and benefits of God, and do not employ well the life received from him; this just God will take away from us his graces and benefits, will deprive us of our life, and no more keep us from the eternal ruin that we have prepared for ourselves. Who is the man that has not reason to fear? Whose piety surpasses that of David? Yet, this pious king prayed to God: "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?" Ps. cxxix, 3. But he added at once: "With thee is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of thy law, I have waited for thee, O Lord." Verily, we have no other hope but in the divine mercy, of which we are reminded in the second part of the Gospel.

II.

HIS MERCY.

The unjust steward makes his appeal also to mercy, wherein we should follow him. But he appeals to mercy by sinful means, wherein we should not follow him.

1. "And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able: to beg I am ashamed." In these words the consciousness of the great misery of the sinner is expressed. Like the prodigal son, he is convinced of his guilt, and longs for salvation, and meditates earnestly on the means of obtaining it. The unjust steward seeks deliverance from temporal misery: the sinner seeks deliverance from eternal misery. The former says: "I know what I will do, that when I shall be put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses;" the latter says: What have I to do, that when my earthly tabernacle is dissolved, they may receive me into the heavenly mansions?

The steward procured for himself the necessary support by fraud.

2. "And the lord commended the unjust steward, for as much as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The Lord commended the unjust steward, not because he had committed a fraud, but because he had acted wisely. He did not commend the fraudulent act in itself, but only the prudent manner of its execution. And confirming this commendation, Jesus adds: "For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The children of this world are the wicked, the infidels and sinners. The children of light are the good men, the faithful, the just. The children of the world seek the things that are of the world; the children of light seek the things that are in heaven: but whether of the two are the wiser and the more industrious in their way? Are we not witnesses every day of the fact, that the children of the world are wiser

and more industrious in regard to the pursuit of things pertaining to temporal life, than the children of light in regard to those which pertain to everlasting life?

3. "And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." The unjust steward distributed the property of his lord among his debtors; and having no right to do so, he acted unjustly. The Lord whose stewards we are, has not only allowed, but has also exhorted, us to distribute his goods among his debtors—our fellow-men—that we may find grace and mercy before him.—Wealth is called the *mammon* of iniquity, because it is a consequence of sin, without which there would be no *Mine* or *Thine;* and because it often leads men to injustice and is frequently not used in the right manner. Make good use of your temporal goods, by liberal alms-giving; and the poor will be your friends and open heaven for you. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat."

VIII.

MARY MAGDALENE FOUR TIMES AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

A lady of great wealth and high rank, but a notorious sinner, is presented to us in the to-day's Gospel as shedding tears at the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee:—a touching scene, and one well worthy of our most serious meditation! As we read, however, in Holy Scripture, that Mary Magdalene prostrated herself, not only once, but four different times, at the feet of Jesus, let us consider her conduct at those four occasions.

I.

MARY IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON.

1. Mary Magdalene "standing behind at his feet, began to wash his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her

head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Lk. vii, 38. By so doing, she made acts of three virtues:

a. Of humility. She stands behind, in the place assigned to the slaves and servants. Like the Publican in the temple, she would not so much as lift her eyes toward Jesus and those who were sitting with him at table.

b. Of contrition. Her tears freely shed, her sighs without words, are proofs of her sincere contrition. She could say with the Psalmist: "Lord, all my desire is before thee: and my groaning is not hidden from thee." Ps. xxxvii, 10. "Learn what grief is burning within her, since she is not ashamed even to weep at the banquet." St. Gregory the Great.

c. Of charity. Her kissing devoutly the feet of Jesus, her reverently embracing them, and the word of Jesus, "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much," bear witness to it; and the constant faithfulness with which she followed Jesus after her conversion, is an evidence of her holy love. "Thus she prepared the feet of Jesus for a sanctuary and an altar upon which she made a sacrifice with tears, with the anointing and with the fire of love." St. Pauline.

2. Let us imitate these virtues.

Whoever is resolved to become converted like Magdalene, let him exercise humility, contrition, and charity, and he will find grace before God. Esdras prayed: "My God, I am confounded, and ashamed to lift up my face to thee: for our iniquities are multiplied over our heads; and our sins are grown up even unto heaven." I Esdras ix, 6. David prayed: "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken thou me according to thy word." Ps. cxviii, 25. The prodigal son said to his father: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son." Lk. xv, 21. Thais, the penitent woman, dared not to pronounce the name of God but continually repeated the words: "Thou who hast created me, have mercy on me." If we, with a contrite heart, return to God, our afflicted spirit will be a sacrifice to God, who will not despise

a contrite and humble heart. Ps. L, 19. Let us renounce the world and sensual pleasures, and, with Mary Magdalene, let us love Jesus tenderly and faithfully.

II.

MARY IN THE HOUSE OF HER SISTER MARTHA.

1. "Martha had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word." Lk. x, 39. We learn from these words:

a. The zeal and delight of St. Mary Magdalene in hearing the word of God. In her we see the word of the Lord confirmed: "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Mt. iv, 4. She found more delight in this spiritual bread than in material food. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was to me a joy and a gladness of my heart." Jerem. xv, 16.

b. The power and sweetness of the word of God. Jesus attracted by his word the multitude. At the foot of the mountain upon which Jesus passed the night in prayer, there were, besides the disciples, "a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea-coast both of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him." Lk. vi, 17. "For he was teaching them as one having authority." Mt. vii, 29. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." Lk. iv, 32. "How sweet are thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth!" Ps. cxviii, 103.

2. We sit also at the feet of Jesus and hear his word, if we hear the word of God preached by his ministers. "He that heareth you, heareth me." Lk. x, 16. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." John xx, 29.

III.

MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother * * * and Mary Magdalene." John xix, 25. There she is represented, with good reason, by sacred art as embracing, kissing, and wiping with her tears, the wounded feet of Jesus.

1. We see there the great love of this holy penitent, her compassion and zeal. She did not leave the cross, in order that she might protect, as it were, her slain Redeemer from all further offence. Respha, the wife of king Saul, stood day and night watching by the crosses on which the bodies of her sons crucified by the Gabaonites were hanging, and "suffered neither the birds to tear them by day, nor the beasts by night." II Kings xxi, 10. It was the natural love of a mother which urged her to do this, whilst Mary Magdalene stood by the cross prompted by a sublimer love to Jesus as the Redeemer of the world.

2. Let us, like Magdalene, love the Crucified. "Let Jesus Christ ever be in your heart; let the image of the Crucified never leave your soul. Let Him be your food, drink, sweetness and consolation. Let Him be your longing and desire; your meditation, your recollection, your prayer. Let Him be to you life, death, and resurrection." St. Bernard. "I see day and night Christ my Lord hanging on the tree of the cross." St. Stephen, Abbot.

IV.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

When, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had heard, through the Angel, of the resurrection of the Lord, they hurried to announce it to the disciples. Jesus met them on their way, saying: "All hail." "But they came up and took hold of his feet, and worshiped him."

1. How great must have been the joy and consolation of St. Mary Magdalene! Her tears of grief were wiped away; her penance was rewarded by the sweetest consolation. Her love for Jesus became the more tender, so that she, in order not to be separated from him, was meditating on his Passion and Resurrection in the solitude for thirty-three years, and is now for ever united with him in celestial glory and joy.

2. May therefore our zeal in doing penance never cease! When St. Peter of Alcantara after his death appeared in a glori-

ous vision to St. Teresa, he said to her: "O blessed penance, that merited me so great a glory! Oh! that we also could use one day these words of the Saint!

Let us invoke the holy penitent Mary Magdalene, that she may implore for us from God the spirit of penance, perseverance in doing penance unto the end, and eternal beatitude!

P. Ignatius.

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

The Gospel for this Sunday relates some of the most striking incidents in the life of Jesus. A few days before his Sacred Passion he wept over Jerusalem, foretold the destruction of that city, and cast the traffickers out of the temple. And all this appears the more remarkable on account of the contrast with the general joy of the people who led the Son of David triumphantly into the holy city. Let us now behold our Saviour in his deep grief, and in his severity toward those who profaned the house of God.

I.

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM, AND FORETELLS ITS DESTRUCTION.

1. "When Jesus drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes."

Jesus, seeing the city, wept over it. The shedding of tears is nothing unusual with men. They often weep for trifling reasons; their tears are frequently not only without good cause, but are sometimes even unholy. They have to sustain a loss—a loss which is intended to be, perhaps, their gain, because their heart was too much attached to the lost good. Their pride, their am-

bition, or any other of their selfish inclinations, is wounded; they are deprived of the means of satisfying their passions; for such and similar reasons they weep, although they should rather rejoice, and thank their God.

But when the Son of God shed tears, they, at all events, must have been caused by a real evil. This evil was the ingratitude, blindness, and obduracy, of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. With how tender a love he had endeavored to save them; but all in vain! The multitude sing Hosianna, but in a few days they will cry out: Crucifige!

Jesus sees in this city, as in a figure, the ungrateful and obdurate portion of all mankind; and over all these obdurate souls he weeps on this occasion, as he sweat blood in Gethsemani on account of all sinners. He weeps over our sins, because we do not weep over them ourselves. Oh! may we, in time of temptation, remember the tears of Jesus, that the cause of his weeping may not be to us an occasion of sinful pleasure!

2. Jesus himself intimates the cause of his tears, saying: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes."

If thou *also* hadst known, as I know, the things that are for thy salvation, for thy peace, and if thou wouldst recognize it at least in this day when I solemnly present myself as thy Messias, manifestly fulfilling what the prophet foretold; thou wouldst not only prepare me a momentary triumph to be again immediately led astray by thy false leaders, but thou wouldst permanently acknowledge me as the Messias, thy Saviour, and wouldst do penance in sackcloth and ashes. But now they are hidden from thy eyes. Through thy own fault, thou dost not see the things that are for thy salvation, and thou art inviting thy eternal perdition.

Jesus addresses similar words to every sinful soul. He speaks to her by inquietude of mind and by extraordinary afflictions. Like Jerusalem, every individual soul has her day of visitation, her last grace, on the use of which eternity depends.

3. Jesus predicts the horrible destruction of Jerusalem in these words: "For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straighten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

Our Saviour foretold the things that thirty-seven years later were accomplished. God took care that the record of the destruction of Jerusalem could create no suspicion; for a Jew, Josephus Flavius, who certainly did not write in favor of Jesus Christ, is the historian of this dreadful catastrophe, by which the prophecy of Jesus was literally fulfilled. The words of Jesus were also verified at a later period when, at the instance of Julian the apostate, the Jews coming together from all quarters of the globe, undertook to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. Red-hot balls of fire issued from the foundations, rendering them inaccessible to the scorched workmen; and owing to repeated earthquakes, whatever was cleared away during the day, was thrown back the next night into the trenches, so that they were reluctantly obliged to discontinue the work altogether.

We see in the fate of Jerusalem the fate of every individual soul, who does not know the time of her visitation, and refuses the last grace offered her. God forsakes her, because she forsook him first. He leaves her a prey to the most cruel tyrant, Satan; and hunger and thirst, fear and desperation will be her portion. Her enemies will cast a trench about her, and compass her round; that is, the passions enkindled by the evil spirit attack her with so great vehemence, that she dies with hunger, because she refuses to accept divine grace. Her children who are within her are beat to the ground, i. e., all her offspring, her thoughts, desires and hopes, have no value for heaven. Not a stone is left upon a stone; for the soul, the once beautiful temple of God, is now in the state of desolation, so that the traits of her divine origin are scarcely discerned any more.

II.

JESUS CASTS THE TRAFFICKERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.

"And, entering into the temple, he began to cast them out that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves."

1. Our Redeemer, by entering into the temple on the occasion of his solemn triumph, lays the glory of this triumph at the feet of his Heavenly Father, thus teaching us that all triumph and glory belong to God, who is therefore called the "triumpher in Israel." I Kings xv, 29.

In paying this homage to his Heavenly Father, he manifests himself, also, as the Son of the Father, the son of the house. For no sooner had he entered the *atrium*, than he acted with an authority becoming only the Son of God; he cast out of the atrium those that sold and bought therein the animals that were to be immolated. Therein he saw a dishonoring of the house of God, and justified his action by quoting Holy Scripture. "It is written (Isai. lvi, 7): My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves" by your fraudulent dealings.

By this proceeding Jesus gave evidence of the power conferred on him as the Son of God. For that the traffickers made no resistance must have been the result of his divine power.

2. The cleansing of the temple has also a double symbolic significance:

a. By vindicating with so burning a zeal the honor of the temple which was to be forsaken by God and his holy angels, that he removed out of the *atrium* even the animals necessary for the divine worship,—how great a zeal and reverence for our Christian temples does he enjoin on us; for those houses of God, in which not the shadow only of the true divine worship, but this worship itself, is celebrated!

b. Several holy Fathers remark also, that our Saviour cleansed the temple of stone, in order to show that he was come to restore the temple which we ourselves are, in its purity and dig-

nity. Therefore the Gospel says, that he was, after that, daily teaching in the temple. After he had cleansed it, he taught in it daily, because the word of God cannot take root in our hearts before it has been cleansed of the thistles and thorns of sin.

Let us then never be unmindful of our soul and body being a temple of God; let us never slight our duty to reverence this temple dedicated by the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Let us never forget to immolate in this temple the sacrifice of adoration and love, and to keep far from it the inordinate love for creatures, the dust and filth of sin.

VIII.

(For the feast of St. Ann.)

THE HOLY MOTHER ANN IN HER DIGNITY, SANCTITY AND POWER.

Concerning the mother of the Blessed Virgin, and the grandmother of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, the Holy Ghost, for inscrutable reasons, observes a profound silence in Holy Scripture. Whatever is related of the life of St. Ann, whatever is said of the power of her intercession, is based upon pious traditions, upon visions of holy souls, and upon inferences drawn by religious persons. But all that we gather therefrom is so edifying and instructive, so consoling and ennobling, that the meditation thereon cannot but prove very beneficial. Let us then select for the subject of our meditation the dignity, sanctity and power of St. Ann.

I.

HER DIGNITY.

Her dignity shines in unusual brilliancy both on account of her descent and of her descendants.

1. *On account of her descent.*

a. She descended from kings and high-priests, since, by the father's side, she came from the tribe of Levi; by the mother's side, from the tribe of Juda.—Her conduct was no doubt worthy of her great forefathers.

b. Who were *our* forefathers? They were strong in faith and just in morals. Are we worthy of such ancestors? "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." John viii, 39.

2. *On account of her descendants.*

a. Her daughter was Mary, predestinated from all eternity to be the Mother of God, sanctified in her Conception, the undefiled Virgin; her grandson was the Messias, the Expected of nations.

b. Have you, Christian parents, sufficient reason to boast of, and to rejoice in, your children? Can you call them your joy and your crown? (Philip. iv, 1.) Perhaps they are to you thorns that you plaited around your own hearts by a negligent, or even bad, education. Oh! that you all would perform your duties toward your children!

II.

HER SANCTITY.

St. Ann was a woman that feared the Lord, and therefore she shall be praised. Prov. xxxi, 30. She was holy

A. *By grace:*

1. By sanctifying grace.

a. St. Ann was cleansed from the guilt and stain of original sin, and sanctified; she preserved also this grace carefully. She would have never been honored with becoming the grandmother of Jesus by nature, unless she had been before his daughter by grace. With all the just of the Old Covenant she longed ardently for the salvation of Israel.

b. The same grace was poured out in our hearts by the sacrament of Baptism. Did we, like St. Ann, preserve it; or do the words of St. Paul apply to us: "Christ is become of no effect to you. You are fallen from grace"? Gal. v, 4. Let us recover the lost grace by tears of penance, the second but laborious baptism. Let us often give thanks for the grace of baptism.

2. By actual grace.

a. St. Ann performed many good works, such as prayer, and works of charity. But these presuppose the assistance of actual grace in their beginning, continuance and perfection.

b. Being the mother of the child "full of grace," she experienced many holy inspirations, whilst she was with child.

c. Have we lacked heretofore the necesssary actual graces? How long did Jesus stand at the door of our heart, and knock? Did we cheerfully open to him, that he might come in to us, and sup with us, and we with him? Apoc. iii, 20. Let us often say in the words of Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." I Kings iii, 9.

3. By extraordinary graces.

a. St. Ann became a mother in her advanced age by a miracle. In her womb the mystery of the Immaculate Conception was perfected by the power of the Holy Ghost. How holy must have been her joy; how profound her humility!

b. Many a soul is favored with extraordinary graces, when her Lord designs to elevate her to a high degree of dignity, and to choose her for his special service. May all such souls be well founded in humility and faithfulness, lest they forfeit these graces!

B. *By her co-operation.*

1. By her solicitude in avoiding sin.

a. Sanctity and sin are incompatible with each other. St. Ann being a Saint, must have abhorred and hated sin, or she could not have remained uncontaminated.

b. Do we also hate sin more than all other evils? Do we flee from, or seek, the danger? "He that loveth danger, shall perish in it." Ecclus. iii, 27. "Lead us not into temptation." Mt. vi, 13.

2. By her zeal in performing good works, and striving for virtue.

a. St. Ann loved God sincerely, and was resigned to his holy will in all tribulations; such as her sterility during twenty years. When yet in her virginal state she was reverenced as a model of purity and chastity. As a wife, she was faithful, peaceful, and fulfilled with scrupulous conscientiousness all the duties required of her towards her illustrious daughter.

b. "But you, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." II Thess. iii, 13. "In doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing." Gal. vi, 8.

III.

THE POWER OF HER INTERCESSION.

St. Ann has a great power by her intercession with God

1. As a Saint and friend of God, who sits with the Son of God in his throne (Apoc. iii, 21), whose principality is exceedingly strengthened (Ps. cxxxviii, 17). God will certainly grant the petitions of his friends.

2. More still as a near relation of Jesus according to the flesh, as his grandmother. The Blessed Trinity will grant her petition.

a. The Father, for whom she bore, nursed, trained, and devoted his favored daughter.

b. The Son, whose grandmother she is by nature.

c. The Holy Ghost, whose bride she educated with so great care, that he is well pleased in her. "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." Cant. iv, 7.

3. Let us elect St. Ann for our intercessor, and invoke her intercession. As grandmother of Jesus Christ, our brother according to the flesh, she is also our grandmother and loves us, her grandchildren. The affection of a grandmother is often greater and more tender, than the affection of parents for their children. Therefore she intercedes for us with great fervor.

Taking into consideration all these privileges of nature and of grace, we must confess, that this "mother is to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men." II Mach. vii, 20.

Louis de Ponte.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

VII.

HOMILY.

In the Gospel for the day of Assumption three persons are represented for our admiration and imitation, Martha in her solicitude, Mary in her contemplation, and Jesus as guest in the house of Martha. By hearing the explanation of this Gospel, you will also learn how appropriately it was selected for this high festival.

I.

SISTER MARTHA.

Martha was conspicuous for her charity, industry and patience:

1. "Jesus entered into a certain town: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house." Behold the charitable sister. To harbor the harborless, to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty,—they are all works of mercy. Martha performed these works of mercy on Jesus himself; wherefore she is called blessed. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Mt. v, 7.

But if Martha is to be called blessed, because she was deigned worthy of receiving Jesus into her house; we have infinitely more reason to call, with all generations, her blessed who, for nine months, bore the Son of God in her womb, who nursed him as her child with the milk of her virginal breasts, and took maternal care of him in his later years; and to say with the woman mentioned in the Gospel: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck!" Lk. vi, 28.

We may also participate in the blessedness of Martha, and even of the Mother of God, by receiving frequently and devoutly Holy Communion. Whenever we receive the Most Blessed Sac-

rament, we receive into our hearts Jesus whom Martha received into her house, whom the Blessed Virgin Mary bore in her womb. If we never relax in the love for Jesus, he will also abide with us. "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him."—And if you desire to receive Jesus into your house, to give him to eat and to drink, do to your needy brethren what you wish to do to Jesus, and you will hear the consoling words on the Day of Doom: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Mt. xxv, 40.

2. "Martha was busy about much serving." Behold the industrious sister! She is anxious to serve well her divine guest.

Martha's zeal reminds us of the great zeal with which the Blessed Virgin served God in the stable at Bethlehem, on the flight to Egypt, and throughout his life.

All women are exhorted by Martha's zeal to perform their menial labors with cheerfulness and zeal.

The Holy Ghost calls blessed the woman who "hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle." Prov. xxxi, 27.

3. "Who stood, and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her, therefore, that she may help me." Behold the patient sister! When she is so busy, and sees her sister Mary taking rest and listening to the words of Jesus, she does not become indignant, but only puts in a friendly manner the question before the Lord to have it decided, whether it would not be better for her sister to help her. And when the Lord decided against her, she accepted his decision without reluctance, and resumed her labor with the same cheerfulness.

Far more patient than Martha was the Mother of God in her many afflictions.—But in our midst patience is seldom found; even brothers and sisters do not live in peace. God will not

abide under a roof where there is no peace. "For he is not the God of dissension, but of peace." I Cor. xiv. 33.

II.

SISTER MARY.

"And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word." We behold in Mary a devout and holy sister.

1. Devotion is a remembrance of, or a conversation with, God. This virtue is exercised whenever we converse with God in prayer, or when, by hearing the divine word, we listen to what God says to us. Mary found the sweetest delight in conversing with Jesus; so she did not think of bodily food, as long as her soul was refreshed with the bread of the divine word that proceeded from the mouth of Jesus.

No one was ever so devout as the Mother of God. She conversed continually with God and her divine Son, and paid close attention to every word porceeding from the lips of Jesus. "And his mother kept all these words in her heart." Lk. ii, 51.

To be devout Christians, it is not enough to be regular in saying your prayers; but you must also hear the word of God, and keep it. "He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination." Prov. xxviii, 8.

2. Mary was also a model of humility, "who also sitting at the Lord's feet, heard his word."

The most perfect model of humility, however, we admire in the Blessed Virgin Mary. When she was elevated to the highest dignity to which a creature can be elevated, she said: "He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid," and "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word."

Therefore, if you long to please God, humble yourselves in all things, and never forget the word of the Holy Ghost: "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." I Pet. v, 5. Especially be humble in church, and sitting, as it were, at the Lord's feet, hear his word.

III.

JESUS CHRIST THE GUEST.

The words of Jesus addressed to Martha contain an instructive lesson for us.

1. "And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary, Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." Our Redeemer does not reproach Martha, but showing his affection for her by twice repeating her name, he defends Mary. He does not say, that Martha has chosen a bad part, but he says, that Mary has chosen the best part. Martha was careful about many things, Mary only about one thing. The corporal works of mercy, and all manual labor, will have an end, because all evils, by which all this is caused, will have an end. Beautiful was the service of Martha rendered to the mortal body of the Lord. But the Word dwelt in this body, and from this Word Mary could not turn away her ears or her heart. The Lord did not reproach the occupation of Martha, but making a distinction between the various occupations, he gives the preference to the one occupation of Mary. And that which Mary has chosen, shall not be taken away from her; but that which Martha has chosen, shall be taken away from her, that she may receive that which is better—eternal rest in place of the many things with which she was cumbered.

2. Martha and Mary are the representatives respectively of the active and contemplative life. In Mary, the Mother of God, the perfections of both sisters are admirably united. She was careful, with Jesus, and for Jesus, about many things. And who tasted ever, like her, how sweet the Lord is? The part of Martha has been taken away from her on this glorious day; the part of Mary, the rest, the delight and sweetness of love, will never be taken away from her.

VIII.

HEAVEN, OUR HOME, IS WORTHY OF EVERY SACRIFICE.

We cannot honor the Blessed Virgin in any better way than by turning our desires and exertions toward heaven. In order to strengthen this sentiment, we will meditate on the following two doctrines:

I.

HEAVEN IS OUR HOME.

1. *Arguments.*

The shape of our body, its erect attitude, the eyes looking up toward heaven, the natural longing of the mind for science, and of the heart for everlasting happiness, create in us naturally a belief, that man is not created merely for this world, that his destiny is not accomplished here below. This natural belief is elevated to evidence

a. By Holy Scripture. "The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few, and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my fathers." Ps. xlvii, 9. "We are sojourners before thee, and strangers, as were all our fathers. Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no stay." 1 Paral. xxix, 15. "Here we have no permanent city; but we seek one to come." Heb. xiii, 14. "While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord." I Cor. v, 6. "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me." John xvii, 24.

b. By the Holy Fathers. "Our present life is a path on which we hasten to our fatherland. As many days, so many steps, by which we come nearer to our destiny." St. Gregory. "In heaven our dear ones in great numbers await us; there are longing our parents, brethren and children, secure of their

own immortality, and only anxious about our own salvation. Toward heaven all the pious in this vale of tears proceed." St. Cyprian.

2. *Inferences:*

a. Who would not long for that celestial fatherland, for that happy home, having a desire with St. Paul to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Philip. i, 23.

b. This longing should not be a sterile sentiment, but should be proved by deeds; for "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. Let us not hesitate to use this holy violence.

II.

HEAVEN IS WORTHY OF EVERY SACRIFICE.

Three things occupy the minds of most men, so as to make them unmindful of the care of their eternal salvation: sensual pleasures, honor before their fellow-men, and riches. Deplorable self-deceit! "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mt. xi, 26. But "the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him." I Cor. ii, 9.

1. Therefore we should never yield to a temptation for the sake of base, sinful pleasures. It would be an exceedingly lamentable levity to exchange pure, everlasting joys for momentary pleasures, which are attended, even here below, with many evil consequences. In the choir of the blessed spirits and of all the glorified friends of God, in the presence of the holiest God, unspeakable beatitude is awaiting us. How is it possible to find pleasure in the joys of the wicked, in envy, in revenge, in lust?

2. We should sacrifice every advantage, every preference, that cannot be gained but by injustice or sinful connivance with the judgment of the world. For we know the eternal goods

merited for us through the blood of Jesus Christ; we know of a glory that is not taken away by an evil tongue, nor even by the grave, the glory of a good conscience, honor before God the just judge, the approval of God and all the Saints. How can we be willing to gain glory by dishonest means, or, by running after earthly treasures, and to lose the goods that "neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and thieves do not steal." Mt. vi, 20.

3. We should also endure sufferings and afflictions in this world for the love of God, and in the hope of a certain reward. "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18.

We live only a short space of time; after that, eternal beatitude is awaiting us. "How I am disgusted with the earth, when I look up to heaven!" St. Ignatius.

Bishop Wagner.

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican being addressed "to some who trusted in themselves as just and despised others" is a warning against presumptuous self-confidence, and against pride that despises other men. Jesus chose a Pharisee and a Publican as subjects of this parable, because the one belonged to that class of men who were universally regarded as pious and just, and the other to a class held in ill-repute as one of sinners. We are now about to consider (1) the going up of these two men into the temple; (2) their manner of praying; (3) the effect of their prayers.

1. *Two men went up into the temple to pray*, the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.

a. Both went the same way, and for the same purpose. But when two persons have the appearance of doing the same thing, it does not follow that they do the same thing in reality. So it is in daily life. Two perform the same work; yet how unlike is their work before God! This will become manifest on the day of the Last Judgment, when of two men in the same bed, of two women who are grinding together, of two men in the field, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Lk. xvii, 34. Let us then in all our actions and sufferings not only observe what, but principally how, we act and suffer.

b. We should also frequently visit our church. For the house of God is especially the house of prayer, although God is everywhere, because (1) it was built and dedicated for this special purpose. (2) The building itself, the pictures, statues, altars, invite and dispose our minds to devout prayer. (3) The exercises in common foster our devotion. (4) The most blessed Sacrament is present, and the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is immolated. (5) Prayer in the house of God has special promises. II Paral. vii, 12, 16.

2. *The prayer of the two men:*

a. The prayer of the Pharisee.

"The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this Publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess."

He was *standing* before God, to enumerate his merits, as if he were not the debtor of God, but as if God were his debtor.

He went up into the temple to pray; but in fact he would not pray to God, but only praise himself. In words he seems to thank God, but in fact he thanks himself. This pride of conscious virtue is, of all kinds of pride, the most abominable and the most dangerous.

Puffed up with presumptuous confidence in his pretended justice, he looks down with contempt upon his fellow-men, and insults them. "I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men;" he gives thanks, not only for being just, but for being just alone, to the exclusion of all others. While true humility sees only the virtues of others, and our own faults; pride sees only our own virtues and the faults of others. How differently did the Saints think and act! Job, of whom God himself said, that there was none like him in the earth, did not exalt himself but confessed: "If I would justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I would show myself innocent, he shall prove me wicked. Although I should be simple, even this my soul shall be ignorant of." Job ix, 20. The Saints regarded themselves as the greatest sinners; they would not exempt themselves, as St. Bernard remarks, from the general misery, in order not to be exempted from the general mercy.

The Pharisee accuses the rest of men of the most abominable crimes: they are in his eyes extortioners, unjust, adulterers. Such Pharisees are found among Christians also. Whoever says for self-justification, "I commit no theft, no fraud; I am no adulterer," gives evidence that he is deprived of true virtue. A Christian ought to know that, although free from these grievous crimes, if he were to die to-morrow, he runs the risk of being buried in hell.

At last, not content with having insulted all other men in general, he contemns the Publican in particular; thus being guilty of the sins of rash judgment, of contempt of men, and of contumely and insult.

After having boasted of not being guilty of certain crimes, he now mentions his pretended virtues, particularly his fasting, and paying tithes, in contrast to adultery and injustice.

Thus the Pharisee concealed before God what he ought to have confessed—his sins; and he confessed before God what he ought to have concealed—his virtues.

b. The prayer of the Publican.

"And the Publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven: but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

The Publican is a model of humility, who did not dare to approach the sanctuary, who did not think of others but only of his own sinfulness. He was also a sincere penitent, who acknowledged and confessed his sins, imploring and hoping forgiveness from God.

"He would not so much as lift his eyes towards heaven." There is an unholy shame,—a shame of piety, of acknowledgment of guilt, of confession, of contrition, of amendment. There is also a holy shame, that is confounded on account of former sins. God exhorts us to this laudable shame, saying: "Be confounded and ashamed of your own ways, O house of Israel." Ezech. xxxvi, 32. Instigated by this sentiment, Esdras cried out in the name of the people: "My God, I am confounded, and ashamed to lift up my face to thee: for our iniquities are multiplied over our heads; and our sins are grown up even unto heaven." I Esdras ix, 6. Such was the shame of the Publican, when he remembered how he had offended his God. As man lacks the courage to lift up his eyes to his benefactor whom he has offended by black ingratitude; so it was with the Publican in regard to God. "He did not dare to look up to God, in order that God, in his mercy, might deign to look down upon him." St. Augustine. Where could man find reason to elevate his head

proudly before his God? St. Bernard remarks: "Man should take into consideration, where he comes from, and be confounded; where he abides, and sigh; where he goes to, and tremble."

And we? To say nothing of the boldness of the eyes in public life, do you restrain your eyes at least in the house of God? What is the cause of your distractions in prayer?

"He struck his breast." By so doing, he accused himself of his inner sinfulness, inasmuch as "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Mt. xv, 19); whilst the Pharisee regarded only external deeds. It was also the manifestation of contrition of heart, and an acknowledgment of having deserved divine punishment. The striking of the breast has since become one of the most universally observed ceremonies in the several functions of the Church, as well as the universal devotional observance in private prayer.

And he said: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Only a few words, but proceeding out of a contrite and humbled heart. The great affliction of his heart did not allow him to say more; yet because his words proceeded out of a contrite heart, they moved the heart of God to forgiveness. And whoever repeats these words, with the same penitential zeal as the Publican, opens to himself the treasures of divine grace and mercy. For the concluding words of the parable are ever true in regard to every contrite sinner, the words that the contrite Publican went down to his house justified.

3. *The effects of the prayer.*

"I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

Men would have judged, from external deeds, in favor of the Pharisee. But God who scrutinizes the heart, judged quite differently. From this let us learn (1) not to judge from external appearances; (2) not to judge at all, except when our vocation requires it.

The Publican was justified because of his humility; the Pharisee was not justified because of his pride. "Virtue united with pride leads to perdition; sin united with humility leads to life, because pride overcomes virtue, but humility overcomes sin." St. Bernard.

"Everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." Jesus had spoken the same words on other occasions, to-wit: Mt. xxiii, 12. Lk. xiv, 11. The truth of this doctrine is confirmed (1) By daily life. Proud men are despised, modest men are honored; ambitious men are avoided, the humble are trusted. Goliath and David. Vasthi and Esther. Aman and Mardochaei. (2) This truth is yet more strikingly exemplified in the kingdom of God. "He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid. He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." Lk. i. The proud angels were cast into hell; humble sinners take their place in heaven. "Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in time of visitation." I Pet. v, 6. As all Christianity is based upon the self-abasement of God, so there is nothing great in Christians unless it be founded on their own self-abasement. "It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications." Ps. cxviii, 71.

VIII.

PANEGYRIC ON ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

"*Longum est iter per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla.*" This maxim is eminently true in regard to our sanctification. The example of the Saints is more powerful and instructive, than all precepts and rules. And when, in our frailty, we are discouraged in our endeavors to imitate the divine pattern, Jesus Christ, our courage is strengthened when we behold divine sanctity resplendent in men who were subject to human frailty,

as we are. The Church celebrates to-day the memory of a great Saint, who became a Saint by following the example of the glorified Saints,—the memory of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The history of his youth shows an ordinary child of the world, who, trained for the world, and full of ambition, aspired to military honors. Let us, for our edification, meditate for a few moments on this favored vessel of election.

I.

HIS CONVERSION.

1. The occasions thereof were

a. A remote one, viz.: protracted pains and sufferings in consequence of a wound which he had received during the siege of Pampelona.—(Utility of afflictions by detaching the heart from earthly things.) Oh! how frequently has temporal happiness created sinners, and affliction penitents! Would to God, that all afflictions would cause the effect intended by Him.

b. A proximate occasion. His worldliness was not yet cured by his sufferings. He asked for a romance to kill the time. As there was no such book on hand, his servants handed to him the *Lives of the Saints.* He commenced reading reluctantly; but his noble mind was struck with admiration of those generous characters, and filled with an ardent desire of imitating their example.—Exhortation to read good books, especially the *Lives of the Saints.*

c. The immediate cause of his conversion was divine grace enkindling his understanding and inflaming his will, and the co-operation of the Saint, who listened to the voice of grace; whilst we receive so many graces in dull deafness.

2. How did Ignatius accomplish his conversion?

a. He commenced by making the firm resolution to devote his life, henceforth, entirely to the service of God.—A mere volition never leads to true conversion.

b. He prostrated himself before an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, fervently imploring her intercession, that he might live for God and heaven. On this occasion the devil, in his fury,

created a terrible noise, which the Saint regarded as a good foreboding. The evil spirits are tormented by the loss of their prey, as the holy angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners. Yet, the devil cannot resist the power of the Blessed Virgin, who crushed his head, and is the refuge of sinners.

c. Thereupon he made a general confession, and laid the foundation of a new life. Importance of a good confession, especially of a general confession, toward a perfect conversion.

d. He performed works of satisfaction and atonement. After having given away whatever he possessed, he went in pilgrim's dress to Manresa, served the sick in the hospital, and when he was admired as a Saint, he retired into a cavern, where he strove to sanctify himself the more by severe fasting, by chastisements, many prayers and meditations. Only by obedience—the test of true piety—could he be prompted to lessen his austere penance. God rewarded him by taking away from him the scruples of conscience by which beginners on the path of a new life are usually tormented, and against which obedience is the only safeguard.

II.

HIS ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE SALVATION OF MEN.

1. In the beginning he displayed his zeal

a. By writing his celebrated book of spiritual exercises of which St. Francis of Sales remarks, that by means of it as many souls were converted, as it contains letters. These exercises are the product of the divine inspirations with which he was favored at the very beginning of his conversion.—Recommendation of the spiritual exercises, as well for a solid conversion, as for a spiritual revival.

b. By visiting the Sacred Places in the Holy Land, where he intended to remain in order to work in the conversion of unbelievers.—The servants of God are ever intent upon propagating the glory of God, and upon winning many souls for Jesus Christ.

c. By commencing his scientific studies, as soon as he became convinced, that without science it was impossible to achieve great things for the honor of God. At the age of thirty-three years he commenced frequenting the school where young boys learned the rudiments of the Latin language, and did not cease studying until he had finished the regular theological course, when he was promoted to the dignity of doctor of theology. *Scientia sine pietate inflat—pietas sine scientia aberrat—scientia cum pietate aedificat.*

d. By his endeavor to gain influence upon his fellowmen, especially upon schoolmates and children, by means of instruction and exhortation. His zeal was so great, that he asserted, if he had the choice, he would rather remain in uncertainty regarding the salvation of his soul, in order to work more for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, than to die at once with the certainty of his own salvation.—Are you also zealous for God's glory and the eternal welfare of your neighbor on the occasions offered you?

2. By founding the Society of Jesus, he won for the display of his zeal a large field of permanent labor.

a. On Assumption-day in 1534, St. Ignatius, with nine companions, made the vow to renounce the world, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and there to labor for the conversion of infidels; but if that could not be executed in the space of one year, to offer their services to the Pope. Only the latter part of the vow could be executed.

b. Then he wrote the constitution of his order, adding to the usual three monastic vows the pledge to obey the Pope in all things. The rules manifest the wisest insight into the means of self-sanctification, and the most enlightened zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men. His device was: "To the greater glory of God." And lest his disciples should seek their own glory instead of the glory of God, he forbade them to accept ecclesiastical dignities.

c. The Society of Jesus spread so rapidly, that, during the lifetime of St. Ignatius, it owned more than a hundred col-

leges in different Christian countries, had founded innumerable schools, and checked successfully the spread of heresy. It opened the most successful missions in heathen lands, and cultivated science in all its branches with great ability. It brought forth many Saints, as Xavier, Borgias, Aloysius, Stanislaus, Canisius. The striking services rendered to religion, in a time of extraordinary peril and illusion, by this religious order, caused it to be regarded as a special bulwark of the Church, and consequently drew upon it the calumny and persecution of Her embittered enemies.

However great the desire of St. Ignatius was to do good works on earth, yet he wished ardently to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He was often heard to say: "Oh! how loathsome is the earth to me when I lift up my eyes toward heaven!" One may safely say, that his longing for the vision of God accelerated his dissolution. He departed, as the Pontifical Bull expresses it, in admirable sanctity, and many miracles glorified his tomb. God honored him, as he had honored God.

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

In to-day's Gospel we see once more an illustration of the remark of St. Gregory the Great, that Jesus was teaching, not only by his words, but also by his deeds. For, by healing the man who was deaf and dumb, he symbolized the healing of our spiritual deafness and dumbness, which is also performed by his almighty power in holy baptism. As he opened here the ear of the body, so he opens in holy baptism the ear of the soul by imparting the infused virtue of faith; and he opens also spiritually our mouth, that we may confess our belief in him. Therefore the Church has adopted the ceremonies applied by Jesus on this occasion as sacred rites, to be observed in conferring the sacrament of baptism. Let us now consider the several circumstances under which this miracle was performed.

1. After describing the spot whereon it took place, the Gospel continues: "And they bring to him one that was deaf and dumb: and they besought him to lay his hand upon him." His friends bring him to Jesus, because he did not know the Messias, and because, through lack of speech, he could not utter his request.

Nor can those who are to be baptized come to Jesus whom they do not know, and to whom they cannot speak, unless they are brought to him by others. And, after baptism, they are often in need of a kind spiritual father, and mother, who also have to answer before the Church for the Christian education of the children. Learn from this that it is not an indifferent thing whom you choose as sponsors at the baptism of your children. Anyways, you are not permitted to choose unbelievers, heretics, or notorious sinners.

Those who brought to Jesus one that was deaf and dumb, besought him to lay his hand upon him. They knew that he had

healed many sick persons by the imposition of hands; and this was done also by the prophets of the Old Covenant. How did Jesus grant their request?

2. "And taking him aside from the multitude, he put his fingers into his ears; and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, that is, Be opened."

a. Jesus took him aside, to draw his attention exclusively to himself and his miraculous power, without being distracted by the presence of the multitude.

As St. Jerome and Ven. Bede remark, we should also learn from this, in order to be healed by Jesus of our sins and spiritual infirmities, to flee from the noise of the world into solitude, where we may be with him alone, and where he may speak to our heart; whilst, in the noisy world, we do not listen to his voice. And if we cannot procure solitude, we may be the more anxious to speak to Jesus in our heart by ejaculations and suspirations.

b. Also, our Saviour employed various ceremonies, in order to remind us of the healing and sanctifying power of his human nature, which is endowed with this power by virtue of the hypostatic union with the eternal Word, according to the doctrine of the oecumenical council of Ephesus, which declared, that the Flesh also of Jesus Christ, by virtue of its union with the Word, is *vivifying;* so that the humanity of Jesus Christ is to us the only means of being united with God. As the humanity of Jesus Christ imparted the light of glory to the souls who had been longing for him in Limbo, so it imparts this light of glory still to all the Saints in heaven; and as it was once, when our Saviour dwelt on earth, the instrument of forgiving sins and justifying sinners; so all sanctifying graces are daily poured down upon us from the God-man Jesus Christ, from the Head upon the members; from the Vine into the branches. For Jesus Christ is the proper and principal dispenser of the holy sacraments.

Besides, our Saviour made use of perceptible signs, for the

purpose of drawing our attention to his holy sacraments, the effects of which he also connected with visible signs. No one should be entitled to put the question, how these drops of water poured out upon the head of the child under the invocation of the Blessed Trinity can produce supernatural effects in the soul, after he had shown that by putting his fingers into the ears of a man who was deaf and dumb, and by touching his tongue with spittle, he had opened his ears, and loosed the string of his tongue. And as our Lord, when he healed the body healed also the soul, the analogy appears the more perfect.

As to the signs themselves employed by Jesus on this occasion, he speaks by them the same metaphoric language as that we employ when we call deaf ears, *shut* ears, and a dumb tongue, a *tied* tongue. He puts the fingers into his ears, as if to open them; spitting, he touches the tongue, as if he would loose it by making it wet.

Since the healing of this bodily deafness and dumbness is a symbol of the healing of our spiritual deafness and dumbness, the Holy Fathers explain the higher significance of the ceremony. Our Saviour, says Ven. Bede, puts his fingers into the ears, by opening the ears of the heart by virtue of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that it may understand and receive the words of salvation. For the "finger of God" is the Holy Ghost, as Jesus himself calls him. And because the knowing of the truth must be succeeded by confessing it, therefore, says the same Saint, it is appropriately added, that Jesus spitting touched the tongue,—a symbol indicating that he prompts those whom he instructed in holy faith, also to profess it without blush or fear.

We learn also, that "looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, that is, Be opened." By his humble prayer, says Ven. Bede, he showed himself as true man; by saying the word of power *Ephpheta*, he showed himself as true God.

By looking up to heaven and groaning, Jesus insinuates also,

that he who desires to be converted, must mind the things that are above, in heaven: and that, on the wings of prayer, he must soar heavenward.

After having thus mentioned the circumstances of the miracle, the Evangelist relates the effect and immediate results.

3. "And immediately his ears were opened: and the string of his tongue was loosed; and he spoke right." The effect of the miracle was performed at once, and perfectly. For he who called the earth into being, needs no time for working miracles.

The same is true of Jesus in regard to the healing of spiritual deafness and dumbness; for only those speak right according to Ven. Bede, whose ears are opened by divine grace, that they may hear and observe the divine commandments, and whose tongues the Lord has made eloquent by the truth of his wisdom.

As on many other occasions, so here, Jesus "charged them that they should tell no man"—a warning for us to seek only the glory of the Father.—They did, however, prompted by gratitude, publish it, regarding the warning of Jesus only as an exhortation to sing the praises of the Lord, which was done even by those who were forbidden to tell any man what they had been witnesses of.

VIII.

THE ONE END OF LIFE.

(Feast of St. Bernard.)

The "eternal weight of glory" kept up the zeal of the Apostle, so that he could write: "For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." II Cor. iv, 16. Although these words apply to all the Saints, they are particularly applicable to St. Bernard, who in order to enkindle his zeal, used to say: "Bernard, to what end didst thou come hither?" This daily question was to St. Bernard the infallible means of reviving his sacred zeal.

Let us also ask ourselves St. Bernard's question, that we may not deviate from the path leading to our last end and destiny.

I.

TO WHAT END ARE WE IN THE WORLD?

1. Certainly not to seek rest for our soul in the possession of earthly goods. Our soul is created for God, and cannot, therefore, as St. Augustine remarks, find rest in restless things.

St. Bernard is a model to us from his childhood

a. In abhorring all allurements of sinful sensual pleasures. He guarded himself against them by mortifying his senses, especially his eyes, by chastising himself whenever he had committed the slightest fault; by fervent and frequent prayer, and by a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He fled all occasions of sin, and when necessary, he even used violence against wicked attempts of destroying his innocence. He was once heard crying out, "Murder! murder!" When those who rushed for his assistance, inquired who had threatened his life, they received the remarkable answer: "Are not those murderers who attempt to rob me of innocence and to deprive me of the priceless life of soul?"

b. In his contempt for earthly things, the vanity of which he described so vividly and convincingly, that he healed innumerable men of the foolish worldliness and inflamed them with heavenly desire. All his brothers were so much moved by his words, that they followed Bernard to Citeaux. Even Nivard the youngest had learned from his brother the destiny of man so well, that when his brothers said to him, "You will now be heir of everything," he replied: "Yes, you leave me earth, and keep heaven for yourselves. Do you call that fair?" And he too left the world. Prompted by the exhortations of St. Bernard, his aged father and uncle, his sister, who loved the world and its pleasures, and Henry, the brother of the king of France, exchanged wealth and honor for the poverty of religious life.

2. Undoubtedly only to know, honor, love, and serve God, and by so doing, to obtain life everlasting.

The evidences of divine love constitute the most charming traits in the life of St. Bernard. By his fervor, eloquence, and miracles, he enkindled the enthusiasm of Christendom, so that two splendid armies set out on the crusade against the infidels. When the expedition turned out a defeat, Bernard was derided and persecuted everywhere, who, however, always replied with celestial patience: "I prefer that they complain of me, than of God. If only the divine honor remains intact, I do not regard the violation of my honor." But God honors, both here and hereafter, those who consider the promotion of His honor the only task of their life. From that time St. Bernard wrought more miracles than history has generally recorded in the lives of the Saints.

II.

TO WHAT END ARE WE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

What is the purpose of having been baptized and received into the holy Church? To the question, "What does baptism impart to thee," you answered through your sponsors, "Life everlasting." Hereby the conviction was expressed, that you hoped to reach your final destiny only through the Holy Catholic Church by fulfilling those conditions which you accepted by being solemnly received into the fold of the Church.

These conditions are:

1. To keep the faith as taught by the Church, to which you pledge yourselves through your sponsors. Do you then act in conformity with your baptismal vow, when, adhering to fashionable unbelief or indifferentism, you break your oath; or when you esteem the changeable opinions of the day more than the unchangeable doctrine of the "pillar and foundation of truth"? Conform your opinions to the infallible teaching of the Church, in imitation of the illustrious example of St. Bernard, who, when a mere child, when a remedy was offered to him which, it was said, would cure his grave bodily disease, refused to employ it, because it seemed to him superstitious, and not in conformity with the teaching of the Church. "Rather to die," he said, "than be restored to health by a means of this kind." His many writings were devoted to exposing and defending the faith of the Church.

2. To live up to this faith, in word and deed, as a good child of the Church. When you were baptized, the Church said to you: "This is life everlasting, that thou lovest the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." You renounced also Satan, and his pomp and all his works.

St. Bernard's entire life gives evidence of his successful endeavor to conform his morals to the teaching of the Church. It was this spirit that prompted him to promote with great fervor the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to found, or reform, one hundred and sixty cloisters to foster Catholic science and life.

3. To promote in proportion to your ability the spread and welfare of the Church. The conviction of her being the only saving institution, and gratitude for the many benefits received, prompt you to be zealous in this regard.

St. Bernard was always a zealous champion in the service of the Church—in his endeavor to make an end of a lamentable schism, in his preaching the Crusade, and in innumerable other labors for the well-being of the Church.

III.

TO WHAT END ARE WE IN OUR PARTICULAR STATE OF LIFE?

1. Have you indeed a state of life? or are you of the number of those who stand idle in the market-place? Remember the sterile fruit-tree that the Lord had uprooted, because it occupied its place to the detriment of the rest. And if you are yet in your youth, do you earnestly consult God about the choice of a state of life?

St. Bernard chose the religious state, in order to be removed farther from the danger of sin. In his later years he declined several bishoprics offered to him, because he deemed himself unworthy of, and unfit for, the episcopal dignity.

2. Have you, heretofore, faithfully complied with the duties of your state of life, following the example of the Saint?

a. *With love* for your vocation, as St. Bernard, who far from yielding to the entreaties of his relations to remain in the world, moved them to follow him in renouncing the world?

b. *With zeal*, as St. Bernard, who fulfilled the duties of a monk so faithfully, that, notwithstanding his youth, he was made Superior in the newly elected cloister of Clairvaux?

c. *With patience*, as St. Bernard, who bore cheerfully the bitter poverty of the new cloister, and never yielded to immoderate sadness, when he did not succeed in his undertakings, as for instance at the defeat of the Crusaders?

d. *With humility*, as St. Bernard, who far from regarding with complacency his grand achievements, said on his death-bed: "I am an unprofitable servant. It is time to have this old, sterile tree uprooted?"

The fear expressed in these words, was unfounded in regard to this holy monk; but it is perhaps well-founded in regard to many of us. Oh! let us constantly ask ourselves St. Bernard's daily question, "To what end didst thou come hither?" so that our life may be to us a tree of life fruitful in good works.

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

When the seventy-two disciples returned from their mission, they said with joy: Lord, the devils are also subject to us in thy name. Thereupon Jesus said to them, that they should not rejoice in this, that spirits were subject unto them, but in this, that their names were written in heaven. Then Jesus himself "rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said: I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." Thereupon Jesus spoke the words of to-day's Gospel, which contains three parts: (1) Jesus calls his disciples blessed. (2) He confirms the doctrine, that in order to have life everlasting, we must love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. (3) He gives by his parable on the good Samaritan an answer to the question: Who is my neighbor?

I.

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES BLESSED.

"And turning to his disciples, he said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them."

In these words, in which our Saviour repeats indirectly the declaration of his being the Messias, the Expected of nations, Jesus calls his disciples blessed,

1. Because they saw him with their corporeal eyes, and heard his divine words from his own lips. It was a great grace indeed, to see Him whom patriarchs, prophets, kings, and all the just of the Old Covenant had desired to see, so that a long life had to them a great value because of the hope of seeing the

Messias during their earthly pilgrimage. And because the Redeemer had not yet appeared, their departure into another world did not appear to them in such a bright light as it has done, and still does to the Saints in the New Covenant. This is strikingly manifesed in the life of Job.

Our Lord has conferred on us also many external graces, for which we ought to be thankful. These graces concern

a. The time of our earthly sojourn. We were not born in the darkness of paganism, nor in the time of painful longing for the Messias, and of the hard servitude of the Law.

b. The place of our birth. How unhappy would it be for us, if we had been born in heathen or heretical countries or communities!

If we do not value these and similar graces,—are we not put to confusion by the queen of Saba, "because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, more than Solomon here." Lk. xi, 31.

2. They were more blessed, because they saw Jesus with their spiritual eyes. For how many saw and heard him who never obtained the heavenly blessedness, such as Judas and the Pharisees! What Jesus said of his Mother, applies to his disciples also: she was blessed, because the Word had become Flesh and had dwelt in her, but more so, because she kept in her soul the Word of God, the same Word by whom she had been made, and who had received Flesh in her. (St. Augustine.) So were also his disciples blessed, not so much because they saw and heard the Son of God, but because, as Ven. Bede remarks, they saw his body and, at the same time, knew his divine mysteries; because they saw him, and, at seeing him, their heart was burning within them, and this fire of love, in consequence of their immediate personal conversing with him, was daily inflamed in them.

We see Jesus also spiritually; we know more mysteries, and have a more perfect revelation than the prophets of the Old Testament. Above all, we enjoy the bodily presence of Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament.

II.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR.

1. The lawyer asked the most important question that ever was asked by men: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" This question presupposes eternity, immortality, and reward; it presupposes the liberty of man to do good, and the possibility of abusing liberty by doing evil; it presupposes the infinite importance of temporal life as the time that decides our eternity. Who is the man to whom the inquiry is not important, what he has to do in order to satisfy the irresistible desire of his heart of being happy for ever? How deplorable is the negligence of him who, notwithstanding its importance, finds no time to put to himself seriously the above question the answer to which should regulate our hours, days and years. For to know what renders us happy for ever, is the only true important knowledge; and to act accordingly, is the only true important employment.

2. Jesus made the lawyer himself answer his question. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said to him: "Thou hast answered right: This do, and thou shalt live."

Our Lord demands very little for our salvation. It is the easiest and sweetest commandment.

The human heart cannot live unless it loves. But what is more worthy of our love than God himself, the infinite and merciful God? If God had commanded us not to love Him, it would be impossible to a just soul to comply with the command. He could not give us a commandment easier to keep than that of the love of God, and of his image, our neighbor. How true is his word: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light." Mt. xi, 30.

The lawyer would justify himself, that is, he would give an explanation why he had put a question to which the answer was self-evident, if this question was understood in the above man-

ner. Therefore he was anxious to know who was our neighbor, since some lawyers said, only the *Jew*, others, only the *just man*, others, only our *friend* were our neighbors. Our Lord gave him a clear answer in the parable of the *good Samaritan*.

III.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

1. How striking and how confounding to the Jewish lawyer, is the answer of our Redeemer given to the question: "Who is my neighbor"! He who fell among robbers, is a Jew, because he went from Jerusalem to Jericho; and the priest and Levite, although particularly obliged to observe the law, and therefore also the love of their neighbor, pass by without aiding their own countryman and fellow-believer, whom they evidently had to recognize as their neighbor; and the Samaritan, to whom the unhappy man was a stranger and enemy, because the Jews and Samaritans were deadly enemies, exercises the duty of loving one's neighbor in so generous a manner, and shows palpably, that the love of our neighbor is to be exercised to every man without distinction of personal friendship or nationality or religion. For if the Samaritan is charitable toward the Jew, although Jews and Samaritans were deadly enemies, who is there who has no claim to our charity?

2. The Holy Fathers explain this parable also in a *mystical sense*, and see in it, as in a figure, the fall and redemption of mankind.

The man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, is man in his state of probation, the wayfarer, as the theological term is, who fell in Adam. The robbers are the infernal spirits, who robbed and wounded him; for sin robs us of sanctifying grace, and wounds us in the natural graces, by darkening our understanding and debilitating our will. The robbers left him half dead: the sinner was neither quite dead, nor quite alive; he was dead in regard to supernatural life, he was yet alive in regard to his natural powers and faculties. The priest and Levite who passed by, symbolize the Old Law that saw the wounds of

man and pointed them out but could not heal them. The Samaritan is Jesus Christ. He healed us by his own wounds; and when he was to leave the earth, he brought us into his Church, and commanded Peter and all the Apostles and their successors to take care of us, and to strengthen us with his mystical wine, and to anoint us with the oil of his grace, until he should return to judge and reward the living and the dead.

Our Lord himself makes the practical application of the parable. "Go, and do thou in like manner." These words are addressed to every one of us. Let us also show mercy to our suffering brethren in word and deed, expecting no reward but the reward that is awaiting us in heaven.—Let us also be thankful to our divine Samaritan for his benefits, and let us put all our confidence in him: he will bind up our spiritual wounds and heal our infirmities.

VIII.

THE TRUE GREATNESS OF A CHRISTIAN.

(Decollation of St. John the Baptist.)

We admire in St. John his greatness of soul, of which his whole life gives evidence. "I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist." Mt. xi, 11.—Ever since we were born again of water and the Holy Ghost, we have been possessed of a high dignity as children of God and members of Jesus Christ, and of a great wealth in God as children of light and grace. Our conduct ought to be in conformity to our dignity; we ought, in imitation of St. John, to show true greatness of soul:

I.

IN RELATION TO GOD.

1. By a firm immovable faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him." Heb. xi, 6.

2. By an intrepid public profession of our faith. "For, with the heart we believe unto justice: but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x, 10. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i, 16.

3. By the observance of the precepts of faith. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by charity." Gal. v, 6. "Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only? * * * For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." James ii, 22.

II.

IN RELATION TO OURSELVES.

1. By mortification of spirit, or by self-denial. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24. "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that renouncing impiety, and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world." Titus ii, 11.

2. By mortification of the flesh. "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." Rom. viii, 13. "God forbid that I should glory, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Gal. vi, 14.

III.

IN RELATION TO OUR FELLOW-MEN.

1. By the good example of a truly Christian life. "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show, by a good conversation, his work in the meekness of wisdom." James iii, 13. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Mt. v, 16.

2. By fraternal correction. "Reprove a friend, lest he may not have understood, and say, I did it not: or if he did it, that he may do it no more." Ecclus xix, 13. "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and reprove him between thee and him alone." Mt. xviii, 15. "Them that sin reprove before all; that the rest also may have fear." I Tim. v, 20.

3. By patience and by forgiving offences. "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so shall you fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. vi, 2. "For if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins." Mt. vi, 14.

4. By making sacrifices for the sake of our fellow-men. "I wished myself to be anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." Rom. ix, 3. "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." John x, 11. "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." I John iii, 16.

Let us not strive for earthly greatness, but rather for true greatness of soul, by which we are and remain truly great in time and in eternity.

Tirinus.

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

The miraculous event recorded in to-day's Gospel, occurred at the time when Jesus went, for the last time, to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch by dying on the Cross. His way led him from Galilee through Samaria, and when he was to enter a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers. They cried out: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us." The Evangelist relates that the Lord cured them all, and that only one of them gave thanks.

I.

THE HEALING OF THE LEPERS.

1. The ten men stood afar off, because they were prohibited by the law from coming in contact with their fellow-men, and they lifted up their voice, saying: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us!" They cried aloud because of the greatness of their misery,—an exhortation for us sinners to say, in the misery of our sins, with the Psalmist: "Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice." Ps. cxxix, 1.

They cried, not every one for himself, but all at once. They did not cry out: Have mercy on *me*, but "Have mercy on us." For they hoped that their joint cry for help would more effectually move the heart of the divine Master with compassion than their single petitions. Our Lord heard their prayer. For he said, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midst of them. And he commanded us to pray, "*Our* Father, who art in heaven; give us to-day our daily bread," etc. The early Christians prayed, therefore, in common, and had their petitions granted. When they were altogether in the same place, they received the Holy Ghost. When Peter was in prison, the whole Church prayed for him. For our prayers are not

worthy of being heard unless the Holy Ghost asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. Rom. viii, 26. But the Holy Ghost is present when Christians are gathered together in prayer. This is one of the principal motives for going frequently to church, where we lift up our voice together with our brethren, saying: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us."

2. "And when he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

Whenever the Lord looks upon us, our infirmities are healed. The Psalmist prayed: "Look thou upon me, and have mercy on me." Ps. cxviii, 132. Jesus quickly extended his succour to those who so earnestly sought it, and without regard to nationality, as one of the ten was a Samaritan. True charity excludes no one. He healed those whose ingratitude he foresaw; thus warning us, not to be instigated by the gratitude of the world to do good, but to act from disinterested motives.

By sending them to the priests Jesus teaches us to observe the existing law, and to reverence the office of the priest. He intimates also, that in the New Covenant those who are infected with the leprosy of sin, cannot be cleansed unless they show themselves to the priests.

II.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE ONE, AND THE INGRATITUDE OF THE NINE.

1. "And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks; and this man was a Samaritan."

As this Samaritan is presented to us as model of gratitude, we may learn from him the nature and qualities of this beautiful virtue.

a. He acknowledged the benefit. "He saw that he was cleansed." To acknowledge the reception of the benefit, is the first act of gratitude demanded by God. St. Bernard, quoting the words Eccle. i, 7: "All the rivers run into

the sea; yet the sea doth not overflow: unto the place from whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again," says: "In a similar manner, all good things that come to us from heaven, should return there by continual gratitude, that God may let them return with greater abundance upon the soil of our heart." And how manifold are the benefits of nature and of grace which demand our gratitude!

b. He showed his gratitude by going back without any delay; by glorifying God publicly, "with a loud voice"; and with great humility and fervor. "He fell on his feet before his face, giving thanks."

c. It was not easy for him to return and give thanks, because he dissociated himself from the nine Jews but now his fellow lepers in doing so. A less generous soul would have been ruled by the majority.—He who earnestly desires to save his soul, will keep the narrow path leading to heaven, will do whatever he deems right, although he should be left alone, as Noe, Abraham, Lot, Josue and Caleb.

2. "And Jesus answering said: Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is not one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger."

The tender heart of Jesus was painfully wounded by this ingratitude.

a. It was an ingratitude base in proportion to the malignant and disgusting nature of the disease from which they had been cleansed.—Are we not indebted to God for far greater benefits?

b. It was a general ingratitude, since only one out of ten went back, glorifying God.—And, now, of ourselves is there so much as one out of ten grateful to his divine benefactor? Do you, for example, make a fervent thanksgiving after the reception of the most blessed Sacrament?

The words addressed to the grateful Samaritan: "Thy faith hath made thee whole," are an exhortation to every one of us to put an unlimited confidence in our Lord, who is, however, not willing to impart to us his grace, unless we are grateful for the many benefits received.

VIII.
MARY'S AND OUR RELATION TO GRACE.
(Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.)

In the words of the Gospel, "Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ," Holy Scripture speaks not only of the dignity of the Son of man, whose name, *Jesus*, represents himself as our Redeemer from our sins, whilst the name, *Christ*, represents him as the promised king, priest and prophet; but also of the dignity of Mary consisting in her being the Mother of God. It is on account of this sublimest dignity that Mary was born in grace, and for grace.

I.
MARY BORN IN GRACE.

1. *As to our own birth*, it may be said:

a. Of the time before our birth: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jerem. xxxi, 3. For from eternity God decreed to call us into being. And foreseeing our participation in the general fall of mankind, he also from all eternity provided for us the means of grace.

b. When we were born, we were all infected with the universal leprosy, and came into the world as children of disgrace, in need of redemption and grace, and subject to a great many miseries which are the consequence of sin. "For none of the kings had any other beginning of birth. For all men have one entrance into life." Wisd. vii, 5.

c. After our birth we soon found ourselves cast into a world full of sin, scandal and dangers, truly into a land that "devoureth its inhabitants." Numb. xiii, 13. And how many times did we succumb to these dangers; how much misery did we experience in body and soul! All this is palpable evidence of the world sighing under the yoke of sin, and of its being in need of the grace, which was communicated to us through Mary.

2. *Of the birth of Mary*, how differently must we speak!

a. Before her birth she alone was exempt from the universal curse of sin, as it was becoming for the Mother of God and the victrix of Satan.

b. When she was born, she entered the world as the most perfect creature of God, adorned with all prerogatives of grace:

Adopted by the Heavenly Father as first-born daughter, whom he so exalted above all creatures, as to let her partake of his eternal prerogative of calling his Son also her Son.

Known by the Son as his future Mother, and reverenced as such, and as such endowed with all graces.

Consecrated and prepared by the Holy Ghost to be the living temple of the true God, the holiest vessel of grace.

c. After her birth she was, not only by divine grace but also by faithful co-operation, so confirmed in grace, that no danger or persecution affected her in the least.

Let us therefore venerate Mary, and rejoice at her high prerogatives,—not only for her sake, but also for our own sake, since they conduce, too, to our salvation. For

II.

MARY WAS BORN FOR GRACE.

1. Let us consider the Blessed Virgin. She was born

a. For the triumph of grace. The magnificence of divine grace was manifested in her more than in any other creature. Her whole life was a continual miracle of grace: her immaculate conception, her wonderful virginal maternity, her more than angelic purity, her perfection in all virtues.

b. To bring forth the Author of grace. She is not only the morning dawn who announces the Sun of grace, but from whom even the Author of grace was to proceed. Indeed, if our Redemption is the greatest of all graces, the Mother of God occupies altogether the highest position in the kingdom of grace.

c. To communicate grace to us. Because God deigned to give us the greatest of all graces through Mary, he keeps this order in regard to other graces too, and imparts them to us

through Mary as mediatrix. "This is the will of Him who would give us all things through Mary." St. Bernard. Therefore the Holy Fathers call her the gate of heaven, the channel full of the living water of graces, the mysterious ladder leading to heaven, the mother of mankind, mediatrix, co-operatrix of salvation. St. Augustine asserts that he cannot find words enough to exalt Mary.

2. If we consider ourselves, what a different object do we contemplate! A great number of human beings seem to be born and to live

a. To prepare a triumph for sin. Soon they contaminated their baptismal innocence, disgraced their youth, and devoted their maturer age to all kinds of vices, yielding to all temptations with scarcely any resistance.

b. To make all things, as it were, authors of sin: their mental faculties, understanding, will, memory, as also their senses, their temporal goods, such as their authority and wealth; all times and occasions, day and night, Sundays and workdays.

c. To communicate wickedness to others by a bad example and all kinds of allurements. The most lamentable of all abominations is the propagation of evil by parents amongst their children, by superiors amongst their subjects.

How urgent are the reasons that should induce us to deplore so great evils (Jerem. ix, 1), and to foster within ourselves an ardent desire that where sin abounded, grace might abound more! May the intercession and example of the Mother of God, who is full of grace, help us!

Mangin.

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

In wonderfully charming words our Saviour warns us against unnecessary solicitude about earthly things, and exhorts us to seek first the one necessary thing, the kingdom of God and his justice. And knowing the proclivity of human nature to an inordinate desire for earthly things, he deigns to recommend his warning by reasons.

1. He declares *first*, that an inordinate pursuit of earthly possessions is incompatible with the service of God. "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon." It is impossible to have all your love concentrated upon two masters. In particular, an unrestricted love for created things is incompatible with the service of God, the Creator, to whom you give nothing, unless you give him all. He is too great, and our heart is too little, to have our love divided between Him and the creature. It is something like idolatry to love a creature more than the Creator, nay to love it, although less than God, yet not for God and in God. Therefore our Saviour intended to say, that those who love Mammon inordinately, deprive God of their affections, through not loving him as they ought to.

It is evident that wealth is not something evil in itself, or that its possession is incompatible with the service of God. No, not wealth, but the inordinate pursuit, love and accumulation of it, is evil. The servants of God are permitted to possess wealth; but wealth must not possess the servants of God. You must not serve Mammon, but Mammon must serve you. You serve Mammon, if, for the love of riches, you violate the duties of charity or justice, either by employing unjust means in obtaining or increasing it; or by attaching your heart to it so as to seek in it

the happiness of your life, instead of seeking it in the possession of true virtue. For in this case you are a very miserable slave. What can be more pitiful to behold than a man created for God, and made according to his image and likeness, prostrate in the dust of the earth, adoring stones and metals? Miserable service that doth not take away poverty but augments it. With the growth of wealth the want grows also in him who has his heart attached to it. "He despises now the cup, because he thirsts for the river; and the more he has, the more he desires to have." St. Augustine.

2. Since we cannot have our hearts attached to the things of earth, if we wish to serve God; we must not merely be content with avoiding the unnecessary amassing of riches, but we must divest ourselves of all anxious, corroding solicitude for the very necessities of life. "Therefore I say to you, Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on." Our Lord does not censure a prudent, thoughtful, diligence in regard to the necessaries of life, which is sanctioned by right reason, and the example of the Saints. It is only the man that sows that can expect to reap. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Gen. iii, 19. The Apostle tells the idle among the Thessalonians "not to eat." II Thess. iii, 10. What our Lord, then, censures and warns us against is that anxious, fretful, anticipating solicitude, which implies a distrust in God's providence, and also fixes the heart on the earth and withdraws it from God.

In order to dissuade us from indulging in this distracting anxiety, he shows that it is useless, superfluous, foolish, and repugnant to our faith in Divine Providence.

a. "Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment?" He who gave what is greater and more valuable, will not refuse what is less valuable. We must, therefore, trust that He who gave life and body, will not fail to provide their nourishment and the body's necessary covering.

b. A second reason to dissuade us from inordinate anxiety is assigned in the words: "Behold the fowls of the air, for

they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?" If God takes such care of the birds of the air, "the (worthless) ravens" (Lk. xii, 24), how much greater care will he take of men, for whose use and benefit the rest of creation was formed? Instead of reminding us of these irrational animals, he could have reminded us, as St. Chrysostom remarks, of Moses, Elias, John the Baptist and other Saints; and of the people of Israel whom he gave Manna to eat and miraculous water to drink during forty years; but he could not touch the hearts of his hearers so forcibly as by pointing to these irrational animals. If God, he intends to say, provides for his creatures which are not made in his image nor are his children, how much more certainly will he provide for you towards whom he bears the tender relation and natural solicitude of a parent, because he is your heavenly Father.

c. The third reason for laying aside all distracting solicitude is derived from its utter folly and inefficacy. "And which of you, by thinking, can add to his stature one cubit?" Since all your solicitude is not able to do a comparatively trifling thing, why, then, indulge in such vain feelings of solicitude, in reference to greater, viz.: food and the preservation of life? Why do you not rather commit yourself to his providence who, without any anxiety on your part, has preserved you to the present time, conferred on you your present stature, and will, no doubt, provide for your necessary wants?

d. From food proceeding to treat of raiment, our Lord assigns a fourth reason to dissuade us from solicitude. "And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more you, O ye of little faith?" Our Lord calls our attention again to nature, selecting, not the flowers that man cultivates, but the *lilies of the field*, which, growing wild, owe nothing to

human care or culture. Their growth and expansion in foliage is their clothing. They labor not, to obtain clothing, as do men; neither do they spin. How wonderfully beautiful is the comparison with Solomon, the most magnificent of kings, whose apparel was so costly, "in all his glory"—at the very height of all his glory and magnificence, he was not arrayed as one of the lilies of the field, the beauty of which can be intimated, but never reached by art. For, to use the words of St. Jerome, "what silken works, what royal purple, what woven picture, can be compared to flowers? What so blushing as the rose? What so white as the lily?"

What he had called before the lilies of the field, when he called attention to their beauty, he now calls "grass of the field," to show how God can and does invest the most worthless thing with exquisite beauty. Now if God doth so clothe this grass of the field, that it exceeds in beauty all the glory of Solomon, with how much greater care will he provide the necessary clothing for his own children, and invest them with beauty, who are to exist, not for a day, but for eternity with himself, as heirs of his kingdom? Why, then, distrust his paternal providence, O ye of little faith?

Our Saviour now draws the inference, that an anxious solicitude for the things of earth is incompatible with faith in God's providence, and that those who give themselves to this distracting anxiety, are no better than the heathen who know not God. Finally he exhorts us to seek chiefly the kingdom of God—heaven—as the most precious treasure, or pearl, and as the most necessary good, "and His justice," which is grace, sanctification, the observance of God's law—the necessary means of obtaining God's kingdom. Then, if we do God's holy will, he will provide for us the necessaries of life.

VIII.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF MARY.

(Feast of this venerable name.)

"Good is set against evil, and life against death: so also is the sinner against a just man. And so look on all the works of the Most High. Two and two, and one against another." Ecclus. xxxiii, 15. To no one do these words better apply than to Mary in contradistinction to Eve.—Eve believes the angel of darkness rather than God, is disobedient, draws upon herself the curse of death, and propagates, amidst painful throes, a generation laden with a curse and punishment.—Mary listens to the angel of light, believes and is obedient; she is called blessed, conceives and bears in sanctity, without pain, nay with exultation, the Saviour of the world who had come to take away guilt and punishment.—O happy contrast! The word *Eva* reminds us of all misery, when read backward, it becomes *Ave*, with which all blessing is connected. The Church reminds us of this, when, in the hymn *Ave maris stella*, she praises Mary in the words "Mutans Evae nomen." Instead of the first, a second, better, mother is given us, instead of the name *Eve* the name *Mary*. As the Church celebrates to-day this glorious name, let us consider its significations, that from them we may gather its dignity and power.

I.

DOMINA, LADY, MISTRESS.

This is the interpretation according to the language spoken in Palestine in the time of Jesus Christ.

1. Mary is eminently our Lady or Mistress:

a. On account of her close relation to Jesus. If he is absolutely *our Lord*, Mary, as his Mother, receives so high a dignity, that we cannot but call her our Lady, our Mistress.

b. On account of her plenitude of power resulting from her dignity. Wherefore St. Bonaventure remarks on the salutation, "The Lord is with thee:" "Inasmuch as the almighty

Lord is with thee, thou art almighty with him, almighty through him, and canst say in truth: "My power is in Jerusalem." Ecclus. xxiv, 15. For this reason St. Bernard compares her with queen Esther, who was all-powerful with the king.

2. History teaches that Mary was ever venerated

a. As the most exalted Lady. No sooner was the time of persecution past, than churches and altars were everywhere dedicated to the name of Mary. During a considerable space of time Christians were deterred from a holy fear from giving to their children the name of Mary. In Poland and Spain even the daughters of queens were, in olden times, not deemed worthy of this name. St. Gerhard, bishop of Csanad and first martyr in Hungary, was the cause of her being usually called the *Magna Domina*, the *Great Lady*, and of having her name pronounced with profound reverence, with inclination of the head and genuflexion.

b. As the most powerful Lady. Realms, such as Hungary, France, Bavaria, were solemnly placed under her protection; she was chosen as the protectrix of all Christendom, and hence the institution of this feast.

3. Let us also honor Mary as our dearest Lady.

a. Let the just always endeavor to venerate, imitate and trust Mary. How many striking traits of tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin do we read in the lives of the Saints!

b. Let sinners who have abandoned the service of Mary, apply to themselves the words addressed by the Angel to the fugitive Agar: "Return to thy mistress, and humble thyself under her hand." Gen. xvi, 9. For the Church applies to Mary the words: "He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord: but he that shall sin against me, shall hurt,—his own soul. All that hate me love death." Prov. viii, 35.

II.

LIGHT OR LIGHTGIVER.

St. Jerome gives this explanation according to the Hebrew. It is appropriate to Mary

1. *As light of sinners.* We apply here the words: "God made two great lights: a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night: and the stars." Gen. i, 16.

a. The "greater light" is Jesus, who "enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." Jesus is the light of the day, expelling the night of sin, the creator of a new day of grace by his redemption. In an eminent sense, however, this light enlighteneth the just—for "the darkness did not comprehend it." John i, 5.

b. The *lesser light* is Mary. She rules the night, i. e., sinners for whom she obtains grace, and whom she is anxious to lead out of the night of sin unto the day of grace.

c. The *stars* are the Saints, who, however, differ from one another in glory (I Cor. xv, 51). Mary, the *queen of all the Saints*, surpasses them all in glory.

2. *As the mediatrix of light.*

a. The origin of all light, of all grace, is no doubt God himself, he is "the Father of lights." James i, 17.

b. But grace is conferred on men principally through Mary, the "mother of divine grace;" so that we have a ready answer to the question of the Lord, addressed to Job: "By what way is the light spread, and heat divided upon earth?" Job xxxviii, 24.

III.

STAR OF THE SEA.

Moses' sister, a type of the Blessed Virgin, was called *Mirjam, bitterness of the sea*, because she was born when Pharao had all the Israelitish boys drowned. When the enemies of the chosen people perished in the waves of the Red Sea, Mirjam sung the praises of the Lord, and her name was changed into *Maria*. The Blessed Virgin was also, first, a true Mirjam when she saw the infernal Pharao intent upon the ruin of Adam's children, and more under the Cross, when her sorrow was great as the sea. But when our redemption was accomplished through the blood of her Son, she became our Maria, the *star of the sea*.

This is the common interpretation of her name, adopted by the Church, who interprets *Ave Maria*, by *Ave maris stella*. This interpretation is very appropriate.

1. The name *Star*. "With the star there is no violation, no decrease, no deviation," says Aristotle. The qualities of the stars are found in Mary:

a. *No violation*, since she was conceived without sin, lived without sin, was not deprived of her virginal dignity by the dignity of a mother, and did not see corruption after her death.

b. *No decrease* of the light. Although all the Apostles, in the night of the Passion, either lost their light or had it decreased, Mary lost not one ray of her light of faith and grace. "Her lamp shall not be put out in the night." Prov. xxxi.

c. *No deviation*. As the stars move with incredible speed in their wonted orbits, so shines in Mary the most punctual and speediest obedience, with which she adhered to the will of God in joy and sadness—a true "handmaid of the Lord."

2. The name *Star of the sea*.

a. The world and earthly light are justly compared to the sea: The sea is unstable, harbors many beasts of prey, is filled with bitterness, and full of danger. Application to the conditions of life, in which Mary brings us help.

b. Mary is to us what a guiding star is to the seamen. By keeping their eyes fixed upon such a star, the mariners find their way through all obstacles into a secure haven. See the application to Mary in the *Breviary*, Lect. II Noct. for this festival.

We learn from this, that this significant name was imposed by God himself, by inspiring Mary's holy parents. Oh! let this name ever be in our hearts, and on our tongues, especially in time of temptation.

Marchant.

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

We see to-day the Lifegiver overcoming death, and thus taking its terrors out of our hearts. "And it came to pass, after this, that he went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude." Jesus, the omniscient wisdom, knew the hour when the dead man was to be carried out of the city of Naim; and this hour he selected to promote the glory of his Father, and his own glory, by raising to life the dead young man. Let us now consider with pious attention this grand miracle.

I.

THE FUNERAL OF THE YOUNG MAN.

"And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her." All these circumstances show, that this death caused more than usual sadness.

1. The dead man was in the prime of his youth; and on this account his death appeared to be the more bitter and the more cruel. Trust not in your youth. "Be you also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come." Lk. xii, 40.—Count not your age by years but by virtue. "The just man, if he be prevented with death, shall be at rest. For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is gray hairs; and a spotless life is old age." Wisd. iv, 7. "We go with joy," said the youthful holy Aloysius at the approach of death.

But far from being "for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (John xi, 4), as the death of Lazarus and of the young man at Naim, a premature death is often caused by vices which invite death, as it were, before his time. These vices are principally:

a. The transgression of the Fourth Commandment. Experience teaches, that the promises and threats connected with this commandment are far from being empty words. Think of Absolom. II Kings xviii. (*b*) To many the vice of impurity is the occasion of death by the operation of natural causes, although they may not be visited with extraordinary divine punishment, as were the Sodomites and the sons of Juda. Gen. xix. xlvi. (*c*) Others fall victims to intemperance. "By surfeiting many have perished: but he that is temperate, shall prolong life." Ecclus. xxvii, 34. (*d*) Rage, that wildness of mind which degrades man to the level of a wild beast, has killed many. "Envy and anger shorten a man's life." Ecclus xxx, 26.

2. The young man was the only son of his mother; and she was a widow.

A great loss indeed! Yet by depriving parents of their children, God exercises his own good right, without infringing the right of others. God has an absolute dominion over his creatures: as he gave life, so he has a right to take it away at any moment. The true Christian will say with Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." Job i, 21. Besides, who is the counsellor of the Lord? Whatever he does, is well done. Perhaps he transplanted a young flower into Paradise, to protect it against the many and great dangers on earth. "He pleased God, and was beloved; and living among sinners, he was transplanted. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul." Wisd. iv, 10.

The remark, that she was a widow, is made to remind us that widows are to the Lord objects of special care. "The father of orphans, and the judge of widows, is God in his holy place." Ps. lxvii, 6. "He will not despise the prayers of the fatherless, nor the widow, when she pours out her complaint. Do not the widow's tears run down the cheek, and her cry against him that causeth them to fall? For from the cheek they go up even to heaven: and the Lord that heareth will not be delighted with

them." Ecclus. xxxv, 17. "Religion pure and unspotted with God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation." James i, 27.

3. "And much people of the city was with her."

In these words the Evangelist praises the citizens of Naim, who attended the funeral of the young man. To bury the dead, or to attend their funeral, has ever been considered as a work of Christian charity, and of true friendship. Tobias was praised by the Archangel Raphael because of this work; David praised the citizens of Jabes Galaad, because they had buried king Saul. The disciples of John the Baptist buried their beloved master; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus Christ our Lord. But let us not be content with paying the last honors to our friends; let us also bestow upon them our last charity by prayers and sacrifices. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." II Mach. xii, 46.

II.

THE RESUSCITATION OF THE YOUNG MAN.

1. "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not."

A tender compassionate heart is regarded by some as human weakness; yet the example of our Lord teaches the contrary. Compassion is the daughter of a noble mother—charity; a sacred bond uniting hearts; the mother of innumerable works of charity, and in itself a sweet consolation to the afflicted, to whom, as St. Gregory says, we give our best treasures, our hearts, by having compassion on them. Be therefore not ashamed of your tender heart, but be careful that it may never be to you an enticement to sin, nor a cistern without water, but the source of consoling words and charitable works.

Jesus had compassion. If no man knows our sorrow, the heart of one is moved with compassion, the heart of Jesus, the God-man. "For we have not a high-priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv, 15.

"*Weep not.*" The mourning widow had not lifted up her voice to pray; her grief spoke aloud to the heart of Jesus, the God of all consolation, who consoled her in words, but also in deed. These words were the language of compassion, not of stern prohibition.

For our Lord does not forbid us to shed tears at the death of our dear ones. Jesus himself shed tears at the sepulchre of Lazarus, his friend. But remember the future resurrection, the truly consoling angel at the side of the grave, "that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." I Thess. iv, 12. We should, however, weep the bitterest tears over our sins, and the sins of others. "The wicked life of a wicked fool is worse than death. The mourning for the dead is seven days: but for a fool and an ungodly man all the days of their life." Ecclus xxii, 12.

2. "And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."

a. By coming near, and touching the bier, our Lord intended to teach us, that his body is the body of the lifegiving God; that a healing power issues from his very Flesh. The Conqueror of death took hold of the prey of death.

Jesus acts in the same manner with regard to those who are spiritually dead. (1) He comes near by visiting us with his grace. (2) He touches the bier, our body, and especially our heart, on which our soul was being carried to the grave: for the death of the soul is generally caused by the bodily passions, and particularly by the perverse heart, the seat of the will. "The hand of the Lord hath touched me." Job xix, 21. He touches the body by diseases and sufferings, the heart by afflictions and remorse of conscience. (3) He commands the carriers to stand still, by curbing our passions.

b. "And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise." Such is the language of God, "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that are not, as those that are." Rom. iv, 17.

Under the invocation of the divine name, and various ceremonies, Elias, Eliseus and Peter called the dead to life; Christ acts by the same power, by which he created the world. "What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom he will." John v, 19, 21.

Our heart is struck with admiration at hearing of such manifestation of divine power. Yet "wonder not at this; for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God." John v, 28.

"I say to thee, arise." This is the continual warning of the Son of man addressed to the heart of the sinner. Alas! whilst the heavenly hosts fulfill speedily the will of God, the sinner does not listen to his voice. "I have called, and there was none that would answer. I have spoken, and they heard not: and they have done evil in my eyes, and have chosen the things that displease me." Isai. lxvi, 4. Unhappy sleepers! "When destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear." Prov. i, 27. Lest this threat be fulfilled in you, "rise thou who sleepeth, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee." Eph. v, 14.

c. "And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." In a moment the soul returned from *Scheol* into her body. What may we suppose to have been the first words of the risen? No doubt words of adoration, praise, and gratitude.

The sinner, when visited by efficacious grace, sits up, lifting his spiritual eyes toward heaven, longing for its delights, and turns away with disgust from the impure pleasures of sin. He speaks, also, by confessing his sins, giving satisfaction, and glorifying God.

Thereupon Jesus delivers the converted sinner to his mother, the Church, that she may strengthen him with the bread of angels. And the angels and all good men will glorify God, because he that was lost, has been found again; and thus God hath visited his people.

VIII.

MATER DOLOROSA.

(Feast of the Seven Dolors.)

"O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Lam. i, 12. Our holy Church celebrates twice the memory of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, the first time on Friday after Passion-Sunday, the second time to-day, the third Sunday in September. In order to aid in propagating the veneration of *Mater Dolorosa*, I will explain to you, that Mary is truly the sorrowful mother, and that she has been so ever since the birth of her Divine Son.

I.

MARY THE SORROWFUL MOTHER.

The Church applies to Mary the words of Jeremias:

"O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." St. Anselm says, that unless God preserved the life of Mary by a miracle, her sorrow would have destroyed her life at any moment. To be convinced of the bitterness of her sorrows, we should consider, that she suffered especially in her soul, as Mother of God, and without consolation.

1. *Mary suffered in her soul.* Men sometimes suffer many and cruel bodily pains and torments. The holy martyrs underwent the greatest of them. Mary was tormented and crucified in her soul. "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Lk. ii, 35. But the soul can be tormented in a more intense and cruel manner than the body. The body is not able to endure more than a certain degree of pain; when this is exceeded, the body becomes insensible or falls into the arms of death. The soul can neither faint nor die. If then the grief of Mary's soul was greater than the piercing bodily pains of the suffering, it must have been great as the sea, and bitter as the waters of the sea.

2. *She suffered as the Mother of God.* A mother suffers with her child. St. Augustine says of the mother of the Machabees: "By seeing them she suffered with all of them. Since she loved all, she suffered in her heart whatever they suffered in their bodies." The same must be said of Mary. "The heart of Mary was as a mirror in which the strokes, the wounds, and all the sufferings of Jesus, were to be seen."

Mary's martyrdom was in proportion to her love for her Son. While other mothers love their children only as children of men, Mary loved her Son as her God: a love beyond measure greater than merely human love. Now if human mothers declare themselves ready to take upon themselves all the pains and sufferings of their sons; Mary must have been willing to endure a thousand times the torments of her divine Son, because she loved him a thousand times more than her own self.

3. *She suffered without consolation.* The holy martyrs experienced great sweetness in their cruel torments, because they underwent them for the sake of Jesus. St. Boniface exclaimed in his torments: "Lord Jesus, I thank thee." St. Mark and St. Marcelline suffered such cruel pains, that even the inhuman judge was moved with compassion. But they answered him: "We never were so full of joy at the most exquisite banquet, as now when we endure so consoling torments for the love of Jesus." Roasted over a slow fire, St. Lawrence made sport of his pains. "I am done enough," he said, "eat, if you will." The more the martyrs loved Jesus, the less they felt their pains.

Did Mary, the queen of martyrs, also draw consolation from her love for Jesus, her tormented and dying Son? Oh! on the contrary, the more she loved him, the greater was her sorrow, because love was the cause thereof. "In the case of other martyrs love lessened the pains; but the more Mary loved, the more she had to suffer, the more painful was the martyrdom." St. Bernard.

Mary suffered the most of all creatures, because she was to be the queen of heaven. Our glory will be proportionate to our sufferings. Because Mary was the queen of martyrs on earth,

therefore she is their queen in heaven too.—And, you "think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you: but rejoice, being the partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that when his glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." I Pet. iv, 12. You must not lose patience when your sufferings last a long time: for you must know, that Mary was *always* the mother of sorrows.

II.

MARY ALWAYS THE MOTHER OF SORROWS.

The greatest pains of the martyrs were of a comparatively short duration. Mary had the future sufferings of her Son always before her eyes; and her whole life was an uninterrupted series of afflictions.

1. Ever since the moment when she conceived in her virginal womb the Son of God, Mary perceived the sorrow that, as a sword, pierced her heart on Golgotha. She understood the sense of the prophecies concerning the Passion of Christ, and was no doubt, by special revelation, informed about the life of her Son. When she saw his hands and feet, she saw the nails that were to pierce them: when she heard his divine heart beat, she remembered the spear that was to divide it into two parts: she saw the crown of thorns plaited around his head. She could say in the words of the Psalmist: "My life is wasted with grief, and my years in sighs." Ps. xxx, 11. "My sorrow is continually before me." Ps. xxxvii, 18. Whereas, in general, time lessens grief, it increased the grief of Mary, because she learned daily more the beauty and amiability of her Beloved, and the hour of his torments was approaching nearer. An Angel said to St. Bridget, that Mary grew up among sufferings, as a rose among thorns, and that, as the thorns grew with the roses, this chosen rose was tormented by the thorns the more she advanced in years. Even after the ascension of her Son, she had the bitter remembrance of his Passion always before her eyes, which, together with the separation from him, kept up her grief until death.

2. Moreover, we must remember, that special affliction marked the various years of her life. In Bethlehem she finds no room for her Son; she brings forth the Son of God in a stable. King Herod threatens the life of the Child, and she flees into a foreign country. When he was twelve years old, she lost him. "Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Lk. ii, 48.

In his public life he "is set for a sign which shall be contradicted." Lk. ii, 34. He is contradicted, calumniated, persecuted by priests, Pharisees, and many of the people. In Nazareth they attempt to cast him down from the hill. How many burning tears must this tenderest of mothers have shed day and night!

And during the Sacred Passion! If the sun was darkened, and the rocks were split; what must the heart of the Mother of God have experienced? If the women who met Jesus carrying the cross wept bitterly; who is able to describe the piercing pain of the Mother? And when she heard her Son saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—O what pain, what grief, what sorrow for his Mother!

Let us then have compassion on the Mother of sorrows. No one ever equalled her in tribulations. "To what shall I liken thee, that I comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion?—Let us learn from Mary to accept at the hands of God sufferings and afflictions, and to bear them patiently. Although the purest of all, she has suffered the most of all. "Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in in the time of visitation." I Pet. v, 6.

J. E. Zollner.

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

"Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life." (Ps. xxii, 6.) To fulfill these prophetic words, the Son of God had descended from heaven; and we see him going about doing good to all who were either spiritually or bodily afflicted, converting sinners and healing the sick. So also the Gospel of to-day presents him to us engaged in this holy office. We will take, then, for the subject of our meditation

I.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES.

1. Jesus accepts the invitation. What may have been his intention?

a. He knew that his deadly enemies were awaiting him, Yet he went to move them to penance. "Although the Lord knew perfectly the deep perversity of the Pharisees, yet he does not decline to dine with them, in order to call them to penance and reconciliation by his doctrine and his miracles." St. Cyril.

Jesus does not forsake the hardest hearted sinners; on the contrary he imparts to them his grace, and admits them to the reception of the holy sacraments, although he foresees that they will never be converted. May everyone of you who have to watch over souls confided to your care, never despair of their salvation, mindful of the words: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick." Mt. ix, 12.

b. Whenever Jesus accepted an invitation for supper, we are informed of his intention to do good. So, at the wedding in Cana, in the house of Zachaeus, and of Simon the Pharisee. where Jesus converted and sanctified Magdalene.

2. The Pharisees were watching him.

a. The circumstances were favorable. It was the Sabbath-day, and a man that had the dropsy expected to be healed. "They watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath-day; that they might accuse him." Mk. iii, 2.

b. They thought within themselves: "Either he will heal the man, and then we shall have a reason to accuse him as a despiser of the law; or he will not heal him, and then we may denounce him as a man without compassion."—Whatever you do, you cannot please the world.

3. Jesus put the Pharisees to confusion.

a. He confounded them by putting the question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" What could they answer? They had not the courage to confess their unrighteous opinion, and therefore they held their peace. What can man answer to God, when He approaches him? The sinner must hold his peace.

b. He showed by his omnipotence, by which he healed the sick, that he did not need their approval, that "the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day." Mt. xii, 8.—Who can resist the all-powerful God?

c. He displayed his wisdom, by showing them their folly, saying: "Which of you whose ass or his ox shall fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day?" The weight of this argument is palpable. Ox and ass—what are they in comparison with man? Yet it required more exertions to draw them out of the pit, than to heal a sick person. Of course "they could not answer him to these things."

d. He manifested their base egotism, which caused them to have more compassion on their domestic animals because of their material value, than on their suffering fellow-men.

4. On several other occasions Jesus refuted the false conception of the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath-day. You learn from this, how important in the sight of the Lord is the proper celebration of the Lord's Day. The Sabbath was observed from the beginning, in order that out of seven days men might have one day of repose wherein to regain strength for the body,

and to have a special care for the eternal rest of the soul. For it is not sufficient before God to rest from servile work, unless you also provide for the wants of your soul, by fervent prayer and meditation, by attending the Holy Sacrifice, hearing the word of God, and receiving the holy sacraments; by performing works of charity, such as visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, consoling the afflicted. If we keep thus the Lord's Day, it will be to us the harbinger of eternal rest in God.

II.

JESUS AND THE DROPSICAL MAN.

1. The misery of the dropsical man symbolizes the misery of sin.

a. His thirst is tormenting; and the more he drinks, the more he thirsts.—The sinner is tormented by a burning thirst after the worthless riches, honors, and joys of the world. He never gets enough, is poor in abundance, despised in honors, unhappy in prosperity, and yet never ceases to struggle for these seeming goods which never fail to end in bitter disappointment.

b. Swollen in all his limbs, he is dreadfully disfigured.—Sin disfigures and destroys the image of God in man, making him heinous before God and his holy angels.

c. The dropsical man feels great pains and anxiety.—"Nothing is more tormenting in this life, than to burn with desire for earthly things." St. Gregory. There we see the words verified: "My people heard not my voice. So I let them go according to the desires of their heart." Ps. lxxx, 12. As an example may serve Antiochus I Mach. vi, 10-13.

2. His healing was performed in the same manner, as the healing of the sinner is to be performed.

a. He had recourse to Jesus, knowing that his disease could not be cured by a human physician. Neither can the sinner find the health of his soul in the world. Philosophy, romances, and theatres never made men better Christians. Not the wicked world, but only Jesus Christ, can heal us. "We are in need of him, and from him alone we can obtain salvation." St. Chrysostom.

b. He met Jesus at supper, being well aware that the Lord, at a scene of festivity, would not endure to see the poor and oppressed suffer.—Jesus has ever a banquet prepared; he has prepared it in the abundance of charity; and in this Holy Eucharist in which Jesus is all love and grace, the infirm soul finds healing and comforting. "Oh! if we would often come to this divine banquet, to find Him, we who are afflicted with the dropsy of sin would certainly be healed." St. Bernard. A fear that keeps us from Holy Eucharist is not from God, because it is not the noble fear of the child. Vide I John iv, 18.

c. He stood before Jesus. The mere sight of his misery, he thought, would move Jesus with compassion. And although it was almost impossible for him to stand, yet he endured until he was healed.—If you only acknowledge your misery of sin, and lift up your spiritual eyes imploringly to Jesus, he will look down upon you with commiseration. But perseverance must accompany our prayers and conversion, that we may partake of eternal salvation.

In conclusion, our Lord exhorts us to true humility, without which it is impossible to persevere in virtue. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

VIII.

ST. MATTHEW BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

(Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle.)

Matthew is of the number of those Saints who, once living in sin, gained heaven by perfect penance. As a true penitent he deserves our veneration, which we shall best exhibit to him by learning from his life what we should do, and what avoid, in order to gain heaven.

I.

THE OCCUPATION OF MATTHEW BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.

Matthew followed an occupation quite different from that of

the other Apostles, "the occupation of a money-changer, which is perilous; the trade of a usurer, which is vicious; the profession of a Publican, which is odious." St. Vincent Ferrer.

1. *The occupation of a money-changer*, which is perilous. The possession of money engenders many dangers; the banking business was especially inviting to dishonesty. Matthew "had established a banking business in Capharnaum." St. Vincent Ferrer. "There he was sitting, because he was not able to stand up, being pressed down by the weight of avarice." St. Peter Chrysologus. The Lord had to call him, that he might raise himself up. He stood up quickly. "This is an evidence of the power of Him who called, that he rescued from the midst of evils him who did not desist from his perilous occupation." St. John Chrysostom.

2. *The trade of a usurer*, which is vicious. Usury is repugnant to divine and human law. Matthew had gained great treasures in this way. "He was a defrauder in money, heaping up sins by gain." St. Peter Chrysologus.

3. *The office of a toll-collector*, which was odious, for this class of imperial officers abused their power by oppressive exactions. Therefore the expressions *Publican* (toll-collector) and public sinner had the same meaning amongst the Jews. Matthew held such an office. But when called by Jesus, he left it, lucrative as it was.

II.

THE SUPPER PREPARED BY MATTHEW FOR THE LORD.

The following circumstances deserve our attention:

1. The reason for which Matthew prepared it. He did so

a. To show his true joy, and to give an evidence of his willingness to forsake all things, and to follow Jesus.

b. He would do the little he could, in order to gain the love of Jesus.

c. To give other Publicans an opportunity to know Jesus.

2. The reason for which Jesus accepts the invitation to the supper. He did so

a. To afford pleasure to Matthew, to encourage and reward him.

b. To exhort also other Publicans, and to give them grace.

3. The reason for which the Pharisees grumbled, and reprimanded the disciples. They did so

a. To deceive the disciples, by making them distrust their Master, and to turn them from Jesus.

b. Because they envied Jesus.

III.

THE HONORS OF ST. MATTHEW AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

Jesus conferred upon him great honors and dignities in his Church; for he became

1. *An Apostle.* With one look and two words of Jesus the Publican was converted into an Apostle, a quick and lasting conversion. His zeal corresponded with it. He preached the faith to Jews, the Parthians, the Moors, the Egyptians—far and wide, almost to a whole world.

2. *An Evangelist.* The Holy Ghost through him handed to us the life, doctrine, and law, of Jesus. He was the first Evangelist, and as an Apostle outranks St. Mark and St. Luke.

3. *A martyr.* He fell a victim to the fury of king Hirtacus, because he had induced Iphigeny, whom the king intended to marry, to make the vow of perpetual chastity. The Saint was pierced with the sword, whilst immolating upon the altar the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world.

Let sinners learn from St. Matthew conversion without delay; the converted, zeal; the zealous, perseverance.

Laselve.

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

The subject of to-day's Gospel is the greatest and first commandment, and the fundamental article of faith. The Pharisees inquire: "Master, what is the great commandment in the law?" And Jesus asked the Pharisees: "What think you of Christ?" The answer to the first question is to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves; the answer to the second question is this: Christ is the Son of God, true God. Let us now consider more closely

THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

To the Pharisees who inquired which was the first and greatest commandment, Jesus himself answered, that it is the love of God and of our neighbor.

I. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment." These words intimate not only the object, but also the motives, of our love.

1. *He is the Lord.* "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. vi, 4. Consequently, he has the only absolute claim to our undivided love. He is our Lord by creation, redemption, and sanctification; "the only Mighty, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." I Tim. vi, 15.—*He is God*, and consequently eminently comprises in himself whatever is good. Therefore he has a right to demand of his rational creatures that they prefer Him to all created things, and strive to propagate His glory, and to be united with Him. "This is our God: and there shall no other be accounted of in comparison of him." Baruch iii, 36.—*Our God.* He is *our* God, by having created us in his own image and likeness, and eminently through Jesus Christ, who, as St. Thomas so beautifully says, "se nascens dedit socium, convescens in edulium, se moriens in pretium, se regnans dat in praemium."

2. To what purpose does God demand of us, that we should love him? Not to mention that God, the supreme good, cannot relieve any of his creatures of the duty of loving him above all things, he intends our beatitude by this great commandment. For our heart is restless until it rests in God, who has created it. Therefore our beatitude consists in the love of God, so that "as love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii, 10.) so, also, is the love of God toward us the motive of giving the great commandment.

3. The importance of the subject will justify me in specifying the motives of our love toward God.

a. The infinite amiability of the divine being. (Amor complacentiae.) Whatever in a creature is capable of gaining our affections, beauty, generosity, bright virtue, shining wisdom, —God not only possesses but is it substantially and personally for all eternity. "One is good, God." Mt. xix, 17.

b. No less amiable appears the Triune God by his infinite bounty toward us. (Amor gratitudinis.) Reflect on the benefit of having been created in God's image and likeness, of having been redeemed by his Son, of receiving the fruit of Redemption by the holy sacraments; of having obtained so frequently forgiveness of sins. "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." I John iv, 19.

c. The love of God is recommendable in itself. By loving God we are elevated above the visible creation, above ourselves, rendering us equals of the heavenly hosts.

d. We should love God because of the happy effects of this love. It effects forgiveness of sins. "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." Lk. vii, 47. It promotes virtue. "Love is the death of vices, to virtues the spring of life." St. Augustine. It renders our good works meritorious. I Cor. xiii, 11. It causes resemblance and union with God, here and hereafter. It is "a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life." John iv, 14. "God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." I John iv, 16. "The eye hath not seen * * * what things

God hath prepared for them that love him." I Cor. ii, 9.

II. "And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

1. The second is like to this, because God requires its observance as strictly as the love of himself; and especially because the love of God is in itself *inseparable from the love of our neighbor*, for the following reasons.

a. "He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" I John iv, 20. He whose heart is not moved with the misery of his neighbor which he sees before his eyes, is not capable of love at all; he who does not love the visible image of God, how can he love God whom he sees not?

b. "Every one that loveth him that begot, loveth him also who was born of him." I John v, 1. Since man is the child of God, we cannot love the Creator unless we love his image and likeness; nor the Redeemer, unless we love the redeemed; nor the Holy Ghost, unless we love his sanctified and living temple.

c. "And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother." I John iv, 21. If it is a commandment of God, it is impossible to love God without observing it. John xiv, 21. James ii, 10.

d. "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me. As long as you did it not to one of these least ones, neither did you do it to me." Mt. xxv, 40, 45. Consequently, the love of our neighbor is perfectly equal to the love of God, St. Bernard, comparing these commandments to two wings, says: "No one can soar heavenward on one wing." Even the object of love is in both commandments the same in a certain sense; "for the motive of loving our fellow-man is God. Therefore he who loves his neighbor, loves God." Dionys. Carth.

2. *Who is our neighbor?* Every man, Christian and Gentile, the just man and the sinner, friend and foe. "For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have?" Mt. v, 46. Our pattern in loving our neighbor is God himself, "who

maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." Mt. v, 45. All men are our neighbors, because (*a*) all have the same origin from God and from one couple, Adam and Eve; (*b*) the same destiny; (*c*) all are redeemed by Jesus Christ. "You, who some time were afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ" Eph. ii, 13; (*d*) all are the object of love by the Holy Ghost, who gives every one his grace.

3. "*As thyself.*" Our Lord does not require us, according to St. Thomas, to love our neighbor *as much as* ourselves, because this would be incompatible with the order of love, but in the same mode and for the same motive. The mode of loving our neighbor "as ourselves," may be said to consist in this, that, as we love ourselves, in such a way as to wish for all that would tend to our temporal and eternal happiness, and to wish to avert the evils that would obstruct this end; so, in like manner, we should also wish to promote our neighbor's good, and avert from him all real evils. "All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Mt. vii, 12. "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth * * * and in his sight we shall persuade our hearts." I John iii, 18, 19.

4. "On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the prophets." All the precepts given by God to man, and recorded in the Old Testament, and briefly summed up in the Decalogue, are contained in the two precepts, of loving God and our neighbor. The first precepts of the Decalogue are contained in the love of God; the several precepts of the second table of the Decalogue have reference to the love of our neighbor.

After the Pharisees had exhausted all their useless, captious questions, our Redeemer asked them a question which had for its object, to instruct the people in the necessary, saving faith of his own Divinity. The Pharisees had repeatedly made it a subject of accusation against him, that he made himself the Son of God, notwithstanding the clearest evidence of miracles adduced by

him in proof of this fundamental truth. Now he endeavors to call their attention to the question, whether the Messias is not more than a mere man, by quoting a text of Holy Scripture. If the Messias, he says, is merely the son of David, how doeth he call him *Lord*, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord." We answer: Because the Messias is not only the son of David, but also the Son of God. But the Pharisees could not answer him a word. "Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." Yet they asked again later on the very question referred to here by our Saviour; but then he was in their power; for Jesus stood, spit upon, in their midst. They asked him through Caiphas: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of the living God." Mt. xxvi, 63. The answer given by Jesus did not turn out to their salvation; they remained obdurate.

Let us not be indifferent to questions concerning our faith, and our salvation. The words of the Lord, as proposed by the holy Church for our belief, are words of life everlasting. "Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord; and shalt teach him out of thy law." Ps. xciii, 12.

VIII.

(*Michaëlmas.*)

ST. MICHAEL THE CONQUEROR OF GOD'S ENEMIES AND PROTECTOR OF HIS CHILDREN.

St. Michael is the captain of the armies of God, the type of divine fortitude, the champion of every faithful soul in strife with the powers of hell. He is, therefore, represented by sacred art as a valiant warrior, and was chosen by the Christian knights of the middle ages as patron and pattern. They could not have made a better choice. In him shine forth faithfulness, courage, fortitude and compassion. For he has ever proved himself a victorious conqueror of the enemies of God, and a zealous protector of his children.

I.

ST. MICHAEL THE CONQUEROR OF GOD'S EMEMIES.

1. *In heaven*, when the rebel angels desired to be like to God, when Lucifer uttered the proud menace, "I will be like to God," St. Michael raised the war-cry, "Who is like to God?" He did not leave unrevenged the insult offered to the honor of God, but fought against the dragon, and cast the rebel angels out of heaven. Quick as lightning Satan was hurled into the burning pool. From that hour the great Archangel has been known as Michael, the captain of the enemies of God.

2. *In the Old Testament* St. Michael fought and smote the enemies of God. He rescued the body of Moses from the envious grasp of the Evil One, who was to seduce the Israelites to idolatry. Deut. xxxiv, 6. Jude 9. He stood in the way against Balaam when he attempted to curse the people of Israel. Numb. xxii, 22. It is also a commonly received opinion, that the Angel who slew the soldiers of Sennacherib, was St. Michael. Isai. xxxvii, 36. The Angel who struck Heliodorus, who was about to take away the treasures deposited in the temple, is also supposed to have been St. Michael. II Mach. iii.

3. *In the New Testament* St. Michael is the principal conqueror of the enemies of God and His Church. He uprooted paganism, humbled the heretics and all the proud, who despise the Church. He will be conspicuous in the future combat against Antichrist. "At that time shall Michael rise up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of the people: and a time shall come such as never was from the time that nations began even until that time." Dan. xii, 1.

So great is the zeal of St. Michael in the divine cause. Are we also zealous in fulfilling the mandates of God, and in combating against his enemies, the powers of evil?

II.

ST. MICHAEL THE PROTECTOR OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

1. *The Israelites*, the children of God before the coming of hrist, experienced frequently the special protection of St.

Michael. He ruled the pillar of fire that preceded the people at the time of their departure from Egypt. He appeared to Josue before the taking of Jericho. Josue v, 13-16. He defended the Israelites against the Syrian armies. IV Kings vi, 17. He aided Judas Machabeus. II Mach. x, 29; xi, 6-12; xv, 22. He is also believed to have been the Angel who protected the three young men in the furnace of fire.

2. *The history of the Christian era* has recorded similar events. When, during the second crusade in 1147, the Christian army was in the greatest danger of being destroyed by the enemy, an unknown rider appeared mounted on a white horse, unfurling a white flag, and leading the crusaders to Jerusalem. Constantin, when combating against Maxentius, was aided by an army in the air, led by St. Michael, so that the soldiers were encouraged and won the victory. The Church has ever venerated St. Michael as her special patron and protector. She styles him "the chief of the angelic hosts set over paradise, whom the citizens of heaven delight to honor; the messenger of God to the souls of the just." She invokes him by name in the confession of sin and and summons him to the side of her children in the agony of death.

3. *The suffering souls in Purgatory* venerate St. Michael as their escort from the chastening flames to the realms of holy light. At the Mass for the dead the priest prays in the name of the Church: "Let the standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light, which Thou hast promised of old to Abraham and his posterity."

Let us walk as children of God, that we may be made worthy of the protection of St Michael. Let us frequently invoke his powerful aid for ourselves, and for the holy Church.

Gentner.

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

The Jewish people saw only in Christ Jesus his human nature; his divine nature was hidden from their eyes. Yet they saw his divine power, which they thought to have been conferred on him, as on the prophets of old, by almighty God; wherefore they "feared, and glorified God, who had given such power to men." We Christians, who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, see the divine majesty manifesting itself in Him in a three-fold manner in to-day's Gospel: by forgiving sins, by manifesting secret thoughts, and by healing a man sick of the palsy.

I.

JESUS FORGIVES SINS.

1. When Jesus was in Capharnaum, called his city, because he often dwelt there, and there worked many of his miracles, "behold they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed." "He was carried by four" porters, (Mk. ii, 3) and, being unable to make their way to our Redeemer through the dense crowd, they mounted the flat roof of the house by outer stairs, and making an opening in it at the spot beneath which the Lord was, they let the sick man down on the bed whereon he was carried. "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart: thy sins are forgiven thee." If Jesus of Nazareth was not God, could he have uttered such words? Sin is a transgression of the divine law, consequently an offence against God. Consequently God only can forgive it. If a man cannot forgive the offence committed against another man; much less could Jesus, if he was only man, forgive offences committed against God. It follows, that by forgiving sins, Jesus declared himself to be God, the Messias whom Isaias had prophesied that he would be the Emmanuel, God with us, God in our midst.

2. When the man sick of the palsy heard the words, "Son, be of good heart; thy sins are forgiven thee," the joy of his heart was no doubt exceedingly great. Oh! how good is our God! He calls the sinner his son, and forgives him his sins, before he asks for it. Never despair on account of your sins. The same Jesus has conferred the power of forgiving sins on his Apostles and their successors, saying: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." If you have confessed your sins sincerely, and with a contrite heart, you need not agitate your mind on account of them: our Lord has said to you also: "Son, be of good heart; thy sins are forgiven thee."

II.

JESUS REVEALS THE THOUGHTS OF THE PHARISEES.

1. "And behold, some of the Scribes said within themselves: This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts?" The Scribes thought: Whoever claims the power of forgiving sins as inherent to him, is either God or a blasphemer. But as they would not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be God, notwithstanding his miracles, his holy life, and his wonderful doctrine, therefore they concluded that he was a blasphemer, by ascribing to himself what belongs to God alone. They did not dare, however, to utter their thoughts, but concealed them within themselves. How kind and merciful was Jesus toward these men! In order to convert their obdurate hearts, he revealed their secret thoughts. Is not this a miracle, by which Jesus manifested his divinity?

2. Let us also often remember the reproach of Jesus: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" God sees the secret thoughts of our hearts, the vain and proud, the envious and avaricious, the impure and wrathful thoughts. Whenever we are tempted in this way, let us have recourse to Jesus, our Saviour.

III.

JESUS HEALS THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY.

He defends himself, saying: "Which is easier to say, Thy

sins are forgiven thee: or to say: Rise up, and walk?" Our Lord meant to say: "If a man says, that he cures miraculously a sick man, the fraud is easily discerned by ocular demonstration; but if one says, that he forgives sins, you cannot convince him of fraud by external proof. Therefore, if I really heal the sick in an evidently miraculous way, as you cannot deny; what right have you to call me a blasphemer, when I say that I forgive sins, the truth of which you can neither deny nor approve by ocular demonstration?" We may also say, that, taking into account the mode in which the cure of the sick man was effected, viz.: by mere command, and in a way altogether divine, one was just as easy as the other; because both must come from God, to whom all things are alike easy; so that Jesus meant to say, if he did one, he could not be charged with blasphemy for claiming the power to do the other. "But, that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then, saith he to the man sick of the palsy: Rise up, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." This word was efficacious; therefore the other word, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," was efficacious also.

Let us adhere to the faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, without which there is no salvation, nor consolation at the hour of our death.

VIII.

SALUTARY EFFECTS OF THE HOLY ROSARY.

(Feast of the holy Rosary.)

"The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong: and the mean things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might destroy the things that are." I Cor. i, 27.

How different are the ways of God from the ways of man. If man would perform any great thing, he would use great and important means to accomplish it; but if God would perform

anything unusually great, he would make use of small and apparently contemptible means. He used the rod of Moses as an instrument in performing his great miracles, and in delivering his people from slavery. He chose a shepherdboy to deliver the people of Israel—with a sling and a pebble taken from the brook. He bade Gideon to select three hundred warriors out of thirty-two thousand to deliver his people from the hands of their enemies. He chose the cross, the once accursed tree and sign of ignominy, to be the means of our redemption and the glory of the world. And to convert this world, he sent forth twelve poor, unlearned, fishermen.

The present festival reminds us also of something small and contemptible in itself, that God has chosen for the performance of great things—the holy Rosary. For it has been an instrument in the hands of God for destroying infidelity and heresy outside the Church, whilst it has also been an instrument for destroying impiety, and performing most marvellous projects, within the Church itself.

I.

WHAT HAS IT DONE FOR THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?

1. In order to form some idea of what it has done, we must go back several hundred years, even to the time of the great St. Dominick. He was not, however, the inventor of the beads: they were known before his time, but comparatively little known. Long before his time though, the hermit in his desert and the monk in his cloister made use of this devotion; but until his days, the rosary was but little known throughout the world.

2. Many dreadful heresies had swept over the Church, bearing poisonous torrents before them. The immaculate spouse of Christ was grieved, and she sat as one in mourning and desolation. Every day she saw her children taken away from her bosom infected with the plague-spot of heresy. There were thousands who even dared to call themselves Catholics, but who were like rotten branches, fit only to be cut off from the tree of life and cast into the fire. The Church then sat in mourning.

She saw her children torn from her bosom. The wolf penetrated within the fold, and devoured the lambs of Christ. The devout followers of St. Bernard mourned, but still the heresy went on increasing. The heresy of the Albigenses had carried along with it whole nations, and kings and emperors, and even amongst those who ministered at the altar of God there were many infected with this fearful heresy. Jesus Christ had been taken from His altar, and the idol of Baal set up thereon. The statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary had been trodden under foot by those who denied her glorious title of the Mother of God, and her spotless virginity, and all her wonderful privileges that had been conferred on her by the Almighty. But the time came, when God, looking down from heaven, had pity on his Church, and raised up the glorious St. Dominick, who, like the children of St. Bernard, deplored the spread of evil; but on went the torrent, until one day, inspired by Almighty God, he looked down upon the string of beads he himself was accustomed to recite, and cried out, "Behold the means by which the enemies of God will be overcome." He meditated long on this incident, and the result was, that he went forth conquering and a conqueror. His followers went forth through Europe by his direction, and passing from nation to nation, left the rosary everywhere, instructing the people how to practice that beautiful devotion, and the Church began to triumph.

It was no uncommon sight to see thousands casting themselves at the feet of the saint, and asking to be reinstated in their privileges as Christians, and to be restored to all they had lost by joining themselves to heresy; and we are told that sometimes he would leave tens of thousands of rosaries in their hands, enjoining them to practice that beautiful devotion, that heresy might be destroyed from the face of God's earth. The age of St. Dominick passed away, but the devotion to the rosary did not.

3. In the year 1571, the holy pope, Pius V., prayed fervently that the enemies of God might be scattered, and at the same moment that the holy Pontiff held the beads in his hand,

the infidel was destroyed at Lepanto, not so much by man, as by God. Nearly two hundred years after, another holy Pope, Clement XII., caused the festival of the rosary to be celebrated in all parts of the world, as it is this day, to commemorate a victory gained by the comparatively small army under Prince Eugene of Savoy, over the host of Mahomedans, thus sanctioning what was then believed as it is this day, that it was the prayers which the confraternity of the Rosary of Rome caused to be recited, drew down these blessings on the Church.

Thus it has happened; God makes use of little things to accomplish great ends.

How many would be outside the fold at this day, were it not for those who prayed fervently day and night, week after week for years, reciting the rosary for those outside the Church? The devotion of the rosary has been called "the increase of Christians," because it has been so efficacious in bringing back to the one fold, the erring ones outside. Pope after pope, bishop after bishop, have united in sanctioning this beautiful devotion, which is at once so easy and so holy; and thus one of the smallest things is also one of the greatest means God has made use of for the conversion of heretics and nations to the faith of Jesus Christ.

But this is not all. It is not merely for its effects upon those who are outside the one fold that we should love this beautiful devotion.

II.

WHAT HAS IT DONE FOR THOSE WITHIN THE CHURCH?

How many poor sheep would wander astray and be torn with briars, were it not for the prayers offered on the rosary? I will give you one instance of this.

1. St. Vincent Ferrer, whose heart was filled with love for poor sinners, heard there was a malefactor condemned to death, who refused to confess his crime, or make any preparation for death, and remained obdurate in this state of mind. St. Vincent went to him, with two assistants, and the unhappy man refused to

speak to them. At last the saint said, "Why would you be lost, my poor man, when Jesus Christ wishes to save you?" and the man answered, "I will be damned in spite of Jesus Christ." "Then," said the saint, "you will be saved in spite of yourself"; and kneeling down with his assistants, he recited the rosary, and before he had finished those prayers which the world despises so much, the man threw himself on his knees, and implored him to hear his confession. This is only one instance of thousands that could be mentioned, showing how efficacious is this form of devotion in drawing poor sinners to God, and how pleasing it is in the sight of heaven.

2. Oh! how is it that there are people, even among Catholics, who despise it, who say, "This is not for me, I can read." Why, I can tell you that the Holy Father, who now sits in sorrow at the afflictions which have befallen him at the hands of his own children, and who is stripped not so much of what belongs to him as to the Church of Christ and Christ himself—I can tell you the Holy Father never passes a day without reciting the rosary. Scarcely a bishop or a priest in the world passes a day without reciting it. Those holy nuns and monks who have separated themselves from the world to serve God more perfectly, never pass a day without reciting it; and the most mighty kings and princes have loved to say it.

The great emperor Charles V. never failed to recite the fifteen decades before engaging in any important enterprise. Philip II., king of Spain, when on his death-bed, called his son to him and said, "If you wish that kingdom which I leave you to be prosperous, never pass a day without reciting the rosary." The good Queen Blanche, of Castile, prayed fervently to God to give her a son who would glorify His name, and do much for the salvation of souls, and prayed for a year, reciting the fifteen decades daily; and God heard her prayer, and gave her a son who afterwards became the great and holy St. Louis of France.

Again, just imagine Daniel O'Connell, the celebrated Repealer and Liberator of Ireland, standing at the corner of the Parliament House, in London, with the beads in his hands recit-

ing the rosary, while the fate of his country was being debated in the house. See with what confidence and earnestness did he beseech the intercession of Mary in behalf of his persecuted country.

3. Ah! what a consolation should not the rosary be, not only to those who are not able to read but to those who are. The Rosary should be in the hands of every Christian, and not a day should pass without reciting it, and gaining indulgences thereby. You know how simple these prayers are, and yet what more exalted than the "Our Father,"—the prayer which fell from the lips of Jesus Christ when his apostles said, "Teach us how to pray," that prayer which contains a petition for everything we need. And again, what more beautiful or more salutary than the Hail Mary? But some would say, "Why recite the Hail Mary so often?" But the Hail Mary is rather a mingled ejaculation and prayer to God, passing through the hands of His Blessed Mother. It is like the repetition of the angelical song, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord of Hosts," and is so short and simple that it can be acquired by the most ignorant, and repeated without weariness. Those Hail Mary's are like drops of heavenly rain refreshing the thirsty—like drops of water, which constantly falling, will leave their impression on the hardest hearts.

4. And besides, it is not merely the Our Father and Hail Mary we should think of when reciting the rosary. All the most beautiful mysteries of our religion are to be thought of. It is composed as you know of fifteen decades, namely five joyful mysteries, five glorious ones, and five sorrowful. There are many who know not how to read; but by reciting these beads, and thinking on these mysteries, they will become learned enough to go before the throne of God.

What more need be known than these joyful mysteries, which tell of the Annunciation to Mary, of the coming of the Redeemer, and of His Birth? What more need be known than these sorrowful mysteries, which show that if we would reign with Christ hereafter in heaven, we must first walk along the

way of the cross, before we can hope to be crowned with glory? What more need be known than the glorious mysteries of the Resurrection and triumphant ascension of Christ into heaven, of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and of the Assumption into heaven of the Blessed Mother of God, of this glorious termination to her sorrow, and of her triumphant crowning in the kingdom of her Son? What more need be known than these? For the whole scheme of man's redemption and an epitome of the Gospel is contained in them. He who knows these knows enough, for he is told by them that there is a heaven and a hell; that there is a Redeemer who died for him, by the merits of whose death he cannot fail to be saved, if he will remain faithful to Jesus Christ. What more is there need for? And as these beads pass through the fingers, the Our Father and Hail Mary are recited and meditation made, which, if done devoutly, cannot fail to make a person a saint. How beautiful and consoling is this devotion, which all the saints and holy men and women have loved so much, and which has made so many who otherwise would be lost, saints of God—that devotion which has helped so many thousands, who had led wicked lives, to obtain the grace of conversion, many of them even on their death-beds.

How many are there in this country who live far away from a church and cannot hear Mass on Sundays, have found these their only consolation under God in their difficulties? How many lying on their death-beds have found consolation from touching the beads which hung around their necks?

The blessed John Berchmans used to say, "there are three things which I hope God will let me have at the hour of my death, the crucifix, my beads, and the book of rules;" and a companion said to him on his death-bed; "your prayer, John, has been heard." "Yes," said he, "how good is God, and how sweet is Mary, every prayer that is made through her is sure to be heard, even this which was asked is granted, and do not take them from me when I die, but leave them to me on my body;" and so his crucifix, his rosary, and his book of rules wh h he loved so much were buried with him. It is not without cause

that the fifteen mysteries of our Lord's life, death and resurrection, are liked to a wreath of roses. The rose is composed of the leaf, the thorns, and the flower. The Rosary is composed of the Joyful, the Sorrowful, and the Glorious Mysteries. The joyful mysteries signify the leaves, the sorrowful mysteries signify the thorns, and the glorious mysteries signify the flower.

Love your beads, carry them always with you, never fail to have something blessed about you, for you know not the moment death may come or temptation may arise. There are those who have been saved on the battle field by the crucifix, which has turned aside the fatal bullet: but you must carry it about with you as Christians, and the crucifix which you may wear may be in the hands of God the means of your salvation.

You have seen how beautiful a devotion the rosary is and how pleasing to Mary. Surely, then, it is not necessary for me to exhort you to practice this devotion in her honor, and not let one day pass without reciting it. By so doing, you may be sure that Mary will bestow many blessings upon you and upon your families. Seek, therefore, and reap the benefit of her loving intercession. The cause is plain, for devotion to Mary is a sure sign of salvation, and can therefore belong but to the true Church. Her intercession is so powerful, that no soul who appeals to her as she ought, will be long obstinate in error or in vice. Pray then to her and persevere in imploring her aid, place all your hope and confidence in her loving intercession, recite the rosary daily in her honor; but above all follow the example of the Holy Virgin and practice the virtues which adorned her character, especially, humility. Do this, and she will obtain, by her intercession, assistance and consolation for you in this life, and eternal happiness in the next.

I leave you then before this altar of the God of mercy, that he may deign to inspire you with the light of His Holy Spirit, to put this devotion into practice, and the day will come when, with the rosary around your neck, and the crucifix in your hands, and with the name of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph on your lips, you may

go into the presence of God, to see Him, know him, love him, to serve and possess him, to stand before His throne in company with the Blessed Mother, and all the saints, join in His praises for ever and ever.

Matthew P. O'Brien.

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

Our Saviour spoke the parable of the marriage feast a few days before he commenced his Sacred Passion. He taught in it instead of the obstinate Jews, who declined the invitation to the Christian religion, the Gentiles would first be invited; *secondly* that not all those who accepted the call, whether Jews or Gentiles, would be admitted to the heavenly marriage feast, that is, to eternal beatitude; since, as St. Augustine remarks, all who declined the invitation are bad men, but not all who accepted the invitation, are good men, rather "many are called, but few are chosen."

I.

THE INVITATION AND THE DISDAIN WITH WHICH IT WAS TREATED.

1. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being a king, who made a marriage for his son." The king is God, the Heavenly Father; the son of the king is God's only-begotten Son, our Lord and Redeemer. God made a marriage for his Son by sending him into the world to assume human nature as his own. This union with our nature is compared to the nuptial union, because it is so intimate as to find its image only in the bond of matrimony; although it is not equalled by this, since by matrimonial union two are not united in one person, and the bond is dissolved by the death of one of the two; whereas, at the death of Christ, his divinity remained united with his separated body and soul, and will be united with them for ever.

Indeed, what else is the Incarnation of the Son of God but the nuptials of God with human nature in the womb of the holiest Virgin? This union was strengthened by the holy Cross, on which he purchased the church of God, his spouse with his own blood. Act. xx, 28. And with every individual human soul our Saviour enters into the most intimate union by the holy sacraments of baptism and of penance, and especially by Holy Communion, when he adorns her with the nuptial garment of sanctifying grace, and is so intimately united with her, that she abideth in him, and he in her. This union will be perfected in the heavenly kingdom, when the loving soul shall behold her Beloved face to face.

2. "And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fattings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the wedding. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death." The Jews were called first to join the kingdom of Christ, to partake of the marriage *feast*, that is, of the graces and sacraments of the Church; above all the sacraments of the adorable Eucharist; and of the word of God, by which the soul is nourished; all of which will lead to the enjoyment of eternal bliss in store for the sons of God.

The *servants* first sent are the prophets, who predicted the coming of the future Bridegroom; the *other servants* are John the Baptist, and the Apostles, who announced the Bridegroom after he had appeared in the garment of human nature. They could say: "All things are ready."

The neglect and indifference with which the Jews treated the invitation of the king, going about with the utmost unconcern about the invitation which had been extended to them clearly exhibit the dispositions of the Jews in regard to embrac-

ing the faith of Jesus Christ, after he had shed his blood for them. Plunged in earthly cares, and grovelling in their attachment to temporal concerns—which is a distinguishing characteristic of that unhappy race even to the present day—they undervalued the price of redemption, and preferred frivolous and passing pleasures to the real and permanent joys of the celestial banquet.

Some of them went so far as to maltreat and abuse the king's messengers. The bad treatment of the Apostles at the hands of the Jews is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

How often do we act in a similar manner, crucifying again the Son of God by our sins, and exposing him to mockery, refusing to enjoy his heavenly banquet! This, in a special manner, applies to those Christians, who refuse to approach Holy Communion; engrossed in worldly business, or indulging in illicit pleasures, they crucify again the Son of God.

3. "But when the king heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city." This obviously refers to the destruction of Jerusalem forty years afterwards by the Romans, who were mere instruments in the hands of God to execute his judgments,—they were "his armies."

The temporal punishment inflicted on the unhappy city, Jerusalem, is but a type of the excruciating tortures which, in the next life, the enemies of God are doomed to suffer for ever in hell, into which they will be hurled by the enemies of the heavenly hosts.

At last our Lord sent his Apostles to the Gentiles, who in contrast to the Jews, were in the highways, because, without a positive law, and there left to themselves, they erred as it were, in the open field, without guide. Whether they were naturally good, following the dictates of their conscience, or bad, following the inclinations of their perverse hearts, none of them were excluded. They came in great multitudes, and were gathered into the fold of the one Catholic Church.

II.

THE GUEST WHO HAD NOT ON A WEDDING GARMENT.

1. The second part refers to those who accepted the invitation. Not all of them will be saved. For there are yet other nuptials, of which it is written, "Blessed are they, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," Apoc. xix, 9; and these nuptials are celebrated in that city, into which shall not enter anything defiled. "God has loved us in time," says St. Augustine, "when we displeased him, but only that he might produce in us that by which we please him." And since many place obstacles in the way of the conversion of our souls to the capacity of pleasing Him, therefore a new separation will take place.

2. "And the king went to see the guests: and he saw a man who had not on a wedding garment." The King, or in his stead his Son, comes to visit us, the guests, at the hour of our death. The *wedding garment* without which he hates to see us, is the garment similar to that of the Bridegroom, the garment of divine charity, "that covers a multitude of sins." For charity has made him a bridegroom, and of his bride he demands nothing but love. The only distinguishing mark between the guests, at the hour of death, when the King comes, is the possession or want of charity. As all reprobates die in sin, so all the elect die in charity, either, as St. Francis of Sales says, because they die only in the state of charity, as the just who die a sudden death; or because they die: in making acts of charity, as so many Saints died, or because they died for charity, as so many martyrs; or because they died from charity, as St. Francis Assisi, the wonder of charity, or St. Teresa who was consumed with the flames of divine love, and, above all, as the Blessed Virgin Mary, who died from no disease but the pains of love.

3. And the king said to him: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" Having abused the divine friendship, the sinner will have nothing to say for his excuse. Then the king commanded his holy angels to inflict on

the sinner the inevitable punishment, in the *exterior darkness* of hell, where he will for ever be shut out from the light of God; and where he will also suffer sensible torments, causing "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"For many are called, but few are chosen." This is the conclusion which our Redeemer draws from the foregoing parable. Many were called—the entire Jewish nation—but only a remnant of them were saved; thereupon the Gentiles were called, who where gathered in great numbers into the Church; but there are multitudes of these who do not even think of their eternal destiny. These words should inspire us with wholesome fear about our salvation. Let us not excuse ourselves from the multitude; for God neither excuses nor fears the multitude. Every one of us has to give an account for his soul. Men will be judged individually, not by numbers or multitudes. Therefore let us join those who walk on the narrow road, "and by good works let us make sure our calling and election." II Pet. i, 10.

VIII.

THE RESEMBLANCE OF ST. FRANCIS TO JESUS CHRIST.

(Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.)

True wisdom consists, not in secular science, but in the imitation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Wisdom. True wisdom is that which subdues the passions. St. Francis possessed this wisdom in a marvellous degree, resembling the poor Jesus in his life, and the crucified Jesus in his sufferings.

I.

ST. FRANCIS RESEMBLED JESUS IN HIS POVERTY.

Chosen by God to be a living manifestation to the world of the poverty of Christ,

1. St. Francis renounced wealth and honors, that he might lead the life of Jesus Christ, who had not where to lay his head, having chosen poverty through love of us. Francis was heir to considerable wealth; but he renounced it all.

a. The sacrifice he made of earthly goods was great. He not only renounced his patrimony, but he also restored to his father the garment he had on. Poverty was the harder for him to bear because he had lived in abundance, and now was poorer than the poorest beggar. Yet he never repented of having taken this step. The only regret he experienced was that he had not been poor all his life. Indeed, the courage of a hero! For this example, unheard of up to his time, exposed him to scorn and hard usage which he met with from his father and countrymen.

b. The contempt which he met with was indeed great. It is no longer considered an ignominy to his disciples to choose poverty for their inheritance; the world itself honors their magnanimity, relieves their needs, and esteems their poor life. But Francis was of the number of despised beggars. To his acquaintance he was an object of detestation; they regarded him as a disobedient son, and as a madman.

c. His progress towards perfection was however the more rapid on this account. He had scarcely made the first few steps when he had reached the summit of perfection, shining as a perfect Saint in his contempt of the world and in his profound humility, and above all in his ardent love of God. He had trodden under foot all inordinate self-love.—How slow is our growth in virtue! How often are our few good works contaminated with vanity and pride! And how averse are we to poverty and a low estate! We seek in all things ourselves, not our God.

2. He desired to live like Christ, in order to live for him alone. He longed for nothing but for the honor of his divine Saviour, and to see him reign in the hearts of men. As Jesus, in order to promote the honor of his Father, led a poor, toilsome, and humble life, so Francis chose the same life, in order to promote the honor of Jesus.

a. By his arduous works he sought the honor of Jesus Christ, and strove for resemblance to Him. He was ever engaged in quickening the religious spirit, and in uprooting vices which deform the outward beauty of the Church. He traversed in

imitation of Jesus, his native country from town to town, preaching the love of God, and doing good everywhere. He also strove to extend this blessing to the heathens in Asia and Africa.

b. He endeavored also to resemble Jesus, in his inner life, and in this way to honor Him. He preserved the profoundest humility, by which virtue man most honors God, and by which Jesus honored his Father. Francis declined all praises heaped upon him as unjust, chose the lowest place for himself, delighted in being despised, and refused to embrace the sacerdotal dignity. His humility, however, in no way checked his desire to labor for Jesus. How seldom are so pure a zeal, and so sincere a humility met with. Is not our inferiority, our lowness when we compare ourselves with St. Francis, reason enough to be humble?

St. Francis is also perfect in sufferings.

II.

ST. FRANCIS RESEMBLED JESUS IN HIS SUFFERINGS.

The perfect follower of Jesus must despise worldly joys, love afflictions, and seek the cross: for Jesus did all this. Francis followed his example.

1. He was the admiration of men and angels in his mortification. He did not content himself with enduring the hardships of poverty, but united with them

a. Austerity of penance, to perfect in himself the Sacred Passion of Christ. He observed an almost continuous fast. He ate even of bread very sparingly. He used the floor instead of a bed, and took the discipline mercilessly. In spite of the exhaustion of his body, he had his mind lifted up to God. The more he subjugated his body, the more his spirit was freed. And as his body rejused to obey,

b. He made use of extraordinarily severe means of resisting temptations. When the unclean spirit assaulted him, he did not content himself with combating him with the usual means of prayer and fasting, but extinguished the fire of sensuality by the cold of snow, to unite the merit of suffering with the honor

of victory over the flesh. Similar means are easily found, but rarely applied. On the contrary, we make no effort to mortify ourselves in our struggle against temptations; which is reason why we succumb so often, if not mortally, at least slightly, wounded. Francis found also

c. True delight in afflictions. Few men are willing to gain merits by their daily afflictions. We know that we ought to suffer, but we wish a cross of our own choice; and the cross laid upon our shoulders by God, we will not touch with one of our fingers. Francis knew well, that it is better to bear patiently and cheerfully the afflictions sent by God, than to select some by our own choice. Therefore he bore patiently his various diseases, persecutions and calumnies which were heaped upon his order. His patience was rewarded by the swift spread and the growth in sanctity of the order.—Moreover, St. Francis longed ardently for

d. Martyrdom. He desired, by shedding his blood, to gain souls purchased by the precious blood of Christ. He embarked for Syria that he might find persecutors. Yet he found only admirers of his zeal, whereat his heart was saddened. At last Jesus granted him a singular kind of martyrdom.

2. He received the Cross of Christ as a singular grace. To be quite similar to Jesus, he was deemed deigned worthy to suffer with Jesus on the cross.

a. This miracle was, up to that time, unheard of. Men suffer for God, but St. Francis, on mount Alverno, suffered with God, on the same cross the same torments.

b. This is a heart-stirring spectacle to us because of the tender affection of God for a man, and of a man for God. The glorified Jesus suffers with poor Francis; feeble Francis endures the sufferings of the God-man. Love imparts to the painful sacrifice its value.

Let us endeavor to know and to love Jesus crucified as perfectly as St. Francis.

Cæsar Ciceri.

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

The Gospel of to-day exhorts us to have recourse to Jesus in all necessities; for in him alone is our salvation, and although he sometimes defers granting our prayers, he will hear them at last, if we pray with perseverance and with unshaken faith.

I.

IN JESUS CHRIST IS SALVATION.

1. A certain ruler came to Jesus.

a. His faith was imperfect, as we learn from the words at the end of the Gospel, "And himself believed and his whole house," as also from the reproachful words of Jesus: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." He thought the miraculous power of Jesus confined to certain localities, or to his bodily presence. Yet he expected more from Jesus than from any other man.

b. The disease of the son was dangerous, so that he could not be healed without the miraculous aid of God; for "he was at the point of death."

c. The father, whose tender love had no doubt exhausted all natural means, saw no hope but in Jesus, wherefore he asked imploringly: "Sir, come down before that my son die."

2. Let us learn from the above:

a. Where only hope is to be found. We need help for ourselves, and for those committed to our care, with regard both to body and soul. Man is the neediest of all creatures in God's household. Although men must aid one another, yet they must have recourse to Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing. "All power is given to him in heaven and in earth." Mt. xxviii, 19. "Every best gift, and every perfect gift" comes from him; he invites all those that labor and are heavy laden, to come to

him: he will refresh them. Mt. xi, 28. "Where will you go? Christ is the way. Where will you go to? Christ is the truth. Where will you remain? Christ is the life." St. Augustine.

b. Where we should seek help always and first. Before we go to others to implore their aid, we should go to Jesus by prayer; and if we find no help from others, we should return to Christ again. His promise is true for all times, "Seek, and you shall find" Lk. xi, 9, and also his exhortation: "I love them that love me: and they that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me." Prov. viii, 17.

II.

HE SOMETIMES DEFERS HIS HELP.

1. Jesus said to the ruler: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." In these words he deferred his help, so that the ruler had to entreat him again. Our Saviour acted in the same manner in regard to the woman of Chanaan Mk. vii, and of John xi. He did so

a. To strengthen their faith, and to make known the blessing of faith to his disciples and the multitudes. Is Jesus not able to perform marvellous efforts from afar?

b. To reprimand those present, and all the people, for their continual demand to see signs and miracles. "Master, we would see a sign from thee." Mt. xii, 38. "And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him." Mk. viii, 11.

2. The Lord also sometimes defers granting our prayers.

a. This is the work of his wisdom and charity; for probation is necessary to sober our levity, to strengthen our faith, or to chastise us for having forsaken God. "Every affliction is a baptism of fire." St. Chrysostom. The deeper we are sunk in sins, the more we have need to be baptized with this baptism of fire.

b. The delay itself is grace and help. If God would hear us as soon as we cry up to him, we should soon return to our old vices.

c. Therefore, let us never lose courage. "For though I shall walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me." Ps. xxii, 4. "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 28. Death itself is the sweetest help to all those who die in the Lord. Apoc. xiv, 13.

III.

BY FAITH WE ARE SURE TO FIND THIS HELP.

1. Not discouraged by the answer of Jesus, the ruler continues to pray: "Sir, come down before that my son die."

a. By making use of these few words, he showed a great confidence in the Lord.

b. Jesus loves this confidence, this faith; and he strengthens it by healing the son from a distance. "Go thy way, thy son liveth."

c. When the ruler had witnessed the truth of what Jesus had told him, "himself believed, and his whole house."

2. We find also help in our faith:

a. If we are not always aided *externally*, we receive at least inward help, by gaining strength, patience, and hope of life everlasting. For faith teaches us

In poverty, that we are the children of God, who is our Father in heaven.

In dishonor, that virtue alone is true honor, and the only real ignominy is sin.

In sufferings and tribulations, "that if we suffer with Christ, we may also be glorified with him." Rom. viii, 17.

In the sad remembrance of our sins, that the Lord "desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezech. xxxiii, 11.

At the death of our dear ones, that we are to be re-united in our Father's house.

b. The members of your families will partake in your blessing and spiritual joy, as the "whole house" believed with the ruler. It is supposed by some, that the mother of this son

was Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, who ministered unto Jesus of her substance (Lk. viii, 3), and came to the sepulchre of Him who was risen. Lk. xxiv, 10.

Faith is like to the sun and a bright-shining fire, spreading light and warmth wherever it is found.

Therefore show your firm faith in Jesus Christ and his holy Church, ye parents; and your children will believe with you.

In faith in Jesus Christ we find help in all necessities. If our Lord defers to relieve us, we must persevere in prayer, saying with the ruler: "Come down, O Lord;" and we shall find salvation in Jesus our Saviour.

VIII.

THE SANCTITY OF ST. TERESA.

The holy Church proclaims the praises of her Saints. She celebrates their days, in order to edify her children on earth by the virtuous example of her children in heaven, holding them forth for their imitation. In doing so, she observes the word of the Lord: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house." Mt. v, 15. Such a light was St. Teresa, whose life we will make the subject of our present meditation. Let us consider (1) her admirable sanctity, and (2) the means by which she attained it.

I.

HER ADMIRABLE SANCTITY.

The wreath of her virtues sends forth the sweetest fragrance; her yearning and striving for perfection and resemblance to God is stupendous. Let me single out some of her virtues as so many luminous rays of her blessed life.

1. *In her love of God.* The virgin saint possessed this first and greatest virtue in an unusually high degree; for this

reason she is represented by art her heart wounded with an arrow.

a. All her thoughts were concentrated on God; by prayer, meditation, and frequent Communion she remained always united with him. "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." Mt. vi, 21.

b. God was her only delight. For the love of him she bade farewell to her kindred, and renounced even innocent pleasure. She could say in truth: "Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever." Ps. lxxii, 26.

c. God was the only desire of her heart. Whenever she heard the stroke of the clock, she rejoiced at being one hour nearer to God. Her longing for the possession and vision of God was so vehement, that she used to exclaim: "I am dying because I die not."

2. *Her charity.* The love of our neighbor is inseparable from the love of God. St. Teresa loved her fellow-creatures sincerely.

a. She strove to promote the salvation of others. Evidences of this charitable zeal are her many labors and journeys, her writings, and above all the reformation and foundation of so many cloisters. She used to say: "To save one soul, I would be willing to suffer death repeatedly."

b. She took special care of those whose souls were in peril. Once she prayed during one entire month for one who, after having shown great zeal in the service of God, had become lukewarm little by little.

c. She loved her enemies and adversaries so sincerely, that a bishop said of her: "Whoever desires to be loved by Teresa, must inflict injuries upon her."

d. Also the souls in the chastening flames of Purgatory were the object of her tender affections: she remembered them in all her prayers.

Are your hearts filled with this double love, of God and of your neighbor? You are not able to lift yourself up toward heaven, except on these two wings.

3. *Her patience and resignation* to the will of God. She says in her writings: "I have endured grievous diseases with great patience, and was not inclined to grumble. Let us long for the cross, and embrace affliction. Woe to us on the very day when the cross is taken away from us!" Her motto was: "Either suffer or die."

Although you may never be able to attain the same degree of humility as St. Teresa, at least say by your words and deeds the prayer: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—"If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Mk. viii, 34.

4. *Her humility.* Humility is the foundation of all virtues. "Whoever attempts to gather virtues without humility, scattereth sand to the winds." St. Gregory. St. Teresa possessed this virtue in a high degree.

a. Although deemed worthy of extraordinary graces, and of divine revelations, and rich in merits, she often mentions in her writings her sins and faults, concealing her virtues. Her many and stupendous achievements she ascribed solely to God, ascribing nothing to her own merits.

b. She bore with patience humiliations and calumnies by others. Her best actions were often spoken of with suspicion: many calumnies were spread against her. She never lost her temper, but said calmly: "It is good; if the people knew me better, they would say worse things about me."

Imitate St. Teresa in this precious virtue. Say often with the Publican: "O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." And if you have done good works, give all glory to God.

II.

HOW SHE ATTAINED HER SANCTITY.

Teresa owed her sanctity:

1. *To her parents.* She writes herself: "I enjoyed the great blessing of having virtuous and pious parents. Our mother taught us to pray and to venerate fervently our dearest Lady, and other Saints. Our father was charitable to the poor, he

neither cursed nor spoke evil of others." In one word, in her father's house she saw no scandal, but, on the contrary, edification.

Those of you who are fathers or mothers are called upon to perform an important task, by implanting piety and virtue in the hearts of your children. It is of very rare occurrence that the foundation laid by parents is shaken in later years.

2. *To prayer.* She says: "Prayer was the door and the path to all the great graces conferred on me by the Lord.—I wish I could ascend a high mountain, and thence exclaim to all men: Pray, pray, pray."

Let us then frequently have recourse to prayer, as the life of St. Teresa reminds us once more of the marvellous effects thereof.

3. *To the frequent reception of the holy sacraments.* "The sides of the ladder reaching to heaven are prayer, by which the love of God is asked for, and the reception of the holy sacraments, by the efficacy of which His love is imparted to us.—One should frequently go to confession, that sin may find no rest, no abode in the heart." St. Francis of Sales. No wonder then, that Teresa, who made such frequent use of these means of grace, made such rapid progress in virtue.

If you desire to increase in virtue, draw frequently, as the Saints did, from the fountains of grace, which our Saviour entrusted to his Church.

4. *To spiritual reading and meditation.*

a. St. Teresa often perused the Lives of the Saints, and was thus inflamed with a holy desire to imitate them. She received great edification from reading the confessions of St. Augustine.—Spiritual reading brings great graces. It fires the heart with a desire for heavenly things, and inspires good resolutions. Therefore, let no one of you pass a day, at least a Sunday, without reading a good book.

b. St. Teresa gave herself frequently to meditation on the eternal truths, especially of the last things of man. She was often heard to exclaim: "O eternity! Only one God, only one

death, only one soul!" A vision showed her the very place in hell to which her light faults would have led her. This vision was constantly before her eyes.—Let us also often meditate on the eternal truths, especially on hell. "Descend in your lifetime often into hell in spirit, lest you descend after your death in reality." St. Augustine.

5. *To a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to St. Joseph.*

a. As to her devotion to the Blessed Virgin she writes: "When my mother died I was about twelve years old. I remember that when I reflected on what I had lost by her, I prostrated myself, in great sadness, before a picture of our dearest Lady, imploring her under many tears to be my mother and protectrix. I perceived instantaneously the aid of this most glorious Virgin in all my cares, whenever I recommended myself to her."

b. As to her devotion to St. Joseph she writes: "I have chosen St. Joseph as my intercessor and patron, and have recommended myself to him. I do not remember to have asked of him any thing that he did not grant. The great graces which God imparted to me through this holy father, and the many dangers to soul and body against which he protected me, deserve indeed admiration."—Let us also foster a special devotion to the Mother of God and to St. Joseph.

M. Unger.

All-Saints.

VII.
HOMILY.

To-day the holy Church reminds us of the eight beatitudes, in order to show us which are the principal virtues that lead us to heaven. It is our Lord himself who teaches how we may obtain what all men naturally aspire to, and necessarily seek,—happiness; although this teaching is opposed to the ideas and practices of mankind.

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

a. Poverty in itself does not confer happiness; but poverty *in spirit*, by which words those poor are excluded, who, being such, fail to conform to God's holy will, and do not bear their sufferings and privations with patience. The same words include some who are not actually poor, viz.: the rich, whose hearts are weaned from the wealth of this world. Our Lord, by exalting poverty, lays the axe to the root of all evils, which is the love of riches. "For covetousness is the root of all evils." I Tim. vi, 10. *Poverty in spirit* means also humility, the foundation of all virtues. For he who is humble, is poor before himself, is poor in spirit.

b. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" in virtue of God's unfailing promise; they shall reign with God, and entering into his rest, shall, in a certain sense, participate in his reign over all creation. "Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom; and we shall reign on the earth." Apoc. v, 10. They even in this present time enjoy, by a kind of sensible foretaste and contented happiness, the kingdom of heaven.

2. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."

a. The *meek* are not they who, from natural temperament or stoical indifference, quietly bear the evils of live; but those who, from a Christian spirit, patiently endure them; if sent

by God, without murmuring or repining; if inflicted by man, without retaliation or vengeance, "to no man rendering evil for evil, but overcoming by good." Rom. xv, 17.

b. "They shall possess the land," the land of the living, the new heavens and the new earth. To these who for God's sake submit to be ill-treated by the wicked, is appropriately assigned as a reward the rich inheritance of heaven, hereafter.

3. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

a. Our Lord means those who mourn for their own sins and those of others; as also those who patiently endure the adversities and misfortunes of this world for God's sake, and in a spirit of resignation to his adorable will. Contrary to what the world has always believed and practiced, our Redeemer pronounces, that mourning and sorrow in the above sense, as a state, is preferable to that of joy and mirth.

b. "They shall be comforted," hereafter in heaven, when God shall wipe away every tear from their eye, and there shall be no more mourning, nor sorrow (Apoc. xxi, 4). Even in this life, they receive consolation in the peace and joy of conscience, which is but a foretaste of everlasting joy to come, which made St. Bernard exclaim, "If it be so sweet to weep for Thee, what to rejoice with Thee?"

4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled."

a. Blessed are they who are subjected to hunger and thirst, because justice is refused them, which refusal they bear patiently for God's sake; and injustice inflicted on them in the name of justice sake; or, because they endure such suffering rather than violate justice, i. e., rather than act against conscience.

b. "They shall be filled," another form of expressing the fullness of joy to be reaped for ever in heaven. "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." Ps. xxxv, 9.

5. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

a. The merciful are they who are generous in forgiving injustices, and, by bearing their neighbors' burdens, fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. vi, 2), who are liberal in dispensing alms for the relief of spiritual or bodily want.

b. "They shall obtain mercy," eternal life, which shall free them from all evils and miseries. It is an appropriate reward for those who show mercy themselves, to have mercy shown them, and a judgment of mercy—that is, a favorable judgment, passed on them. Eternal life is a mercy from God. It is the fruit of God's mercy and gratuitous gifts, who, as St. Augustine says, "in crowning our merits but crowns his own gifts."

6. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God."

a. These words are to be understood of cleanness of heart in regard to carnal defilement, of the holy virtue of purity both in thought and act. This virtue, which our Lord so much prized and inculcated on his followers; which he made the distinctive glory, in all its perfections, of his ministers and chosen spouses, was regarded as impossible in the world before his time, and utterly undervalued in practice.

b. "They shall see God," who makes himself, his perfections, his designs of mercy known to the simple and pure of heart in this life, and shows himself to them, as he is, face to face, in the life to come. It is this last, that is held out as a reward, as it is another form of saying, they shall obtain the bliss of heaven. The seeing of God in this life, is a means towards the other as its end.

7. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

a. The *peace-makers* are those who devote themselves to the work of reconciling such as are at variance, whether with themselves, their neighbors, or with God. The world regards those as happy who bravely overcome and trample under foot their enemies, and display their powers and strength in doing so. But our Lord pronounces those, on the contrary, blessed, who, instead of making a great noise in the world, devote themselves

to the quiet work of reconciling all who are at variance. The Apostles and the Apostolic men are included, who, by preaching the Gospel of peace, reconcile man with God.

b. "They shall be called the children of God," i. e., they shall be in reality, and publicly known to be, the children of God; like unto God the Father, who is the God of peace and not of dissension; unto God the Son, who came into the world as peace-maker; and unto God the Holy Ghost, who descended upon earth in the form of a dove, the symbol of peace. As children they shall be heirs of God and co-heirs of Jesus Christ.

8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

a. This beatitude is promised to those who suffer for doing some good and laudable act, or who follow a virtuous course of life, rather than escape persecution. "If doing well you suffer patiently, this is praiseworthy before God." I Pet. ii, 20. Hence, those are referred to, who suffer for the faith; for the rights of the Church; for the practice of any Christian virtue.

b. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "The kingdom of heaven" is considered in this beatitude as conferring great exaltation; since it is just, that those who are trampled on and despised here below, shall be exalted hereafter. In the first beatitude it is regarded as conferring the abundance of heavenly treasures to the *poor in spirit.*

Bishop MacEvilly.

VIII.

A VISIT IN THE CEMETERY.

The holy Church chants in the afternoon of All-Saints the office for the departed souls, and her children follow the time-honored custom to visit the tombs of departed dear ones. The cemetery is a place, on which a Christian should never set his foot, without remembering several important truths of our holy religion. Let me remind you of some of them.

I.

THE GRAVEYARD IS A PLACE OF PEACE TO THE WEARY AND FATIGUED.

We are reminded thereof

1. By the calm and stillness that prevails among those who rest here. Whilst men, in their lifetime, suffer in body and soul, and are tormented by grief, ambition and hatred; every complaint, and desire, are silenced here. The sick, the poor, the captive are released; the wayfarer has reached his goal.

2. By the applications we give to the city of the dead:

a. Cemetery, that is, the place of rest, of peace. The tempest of the passions and of hatred is stilled; friend and foe repose together in peace.

b. God's Acre. The seed is sown by God, and God's will be the harvest on the day of resurrection.

c. Churchyard. The dead who found here their resting place, are members of the Church, and rest in sacred ground. Therefore it is decent to keep this spot in good order. We also hope, that eternal rest has been given to the souls, of which no one can deprive them,—if they have served Christ here below, and atoned for their sins.

II.

THE DEAD WARN THE LIVING.

1. *They warn us.* We do not know whether their souls enjoy eternal rest; for only those who died in the grace of God, can enter life everlasting. And how many die in mortal sin; and how horrible is their fate! As Dives of old, they wish to send us some one to warn us, that we might beware of that horrible place. But we have not only Moses and the prophets but the Church and her ministers, by whom we are continually warned.

2. *They warn in particular worldlings*

a. Not to search eagerly terrestrial things. They tell them, that, whilst they were on earth beautiful, wealthy and honored, they are now deformed, poor, and tormented; whereas those are now honored and happy who in their temporal life were exposed to persecution, calumny, and contumely.

b. Not to commit sin, not to die impenitent. The most dreadful fate that can befall the sinner, is to die in mortal sin and to fall into the hands of the living God. Let us work our salvation with fear and trembling.

III.

THE LAMENTING OF THE DEAD.

1. The dead lament. There is a place, where the souls of the departed are chastened, and where only our good works can give them relief. They ask for them imploringly. Many receive nothing.

2. The Church hears the prayers of the dead. How many holy masses; how many prayers are said for their relief, especially in this time!

3. Let us also come to the succour of our parents, relations, benefactors and friends, who cry out to you in the words of Job: "Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, at least ye my friends."

When you go to the cemetery, let these and similar thoughts occupy your minds.

Hungari.

Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

When asked by Peter, "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" our Redeemer answered him: "I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven;" by which words he meant to express an indefinite number; so that, no matter how often our brother may sin against us, if he repents of it, we are bound to pardon him, and we should be always sincerely disposed to pardon him from our heart. This holy doctrine he vividly illustrated in a parable; which may be considered under three distinct divisions. The first exhibits the infinite mercy of our good God towards repentant sinners. The second, the execrable inhumanity of him who is unwilling to forgive. The third, the judgment without mercy against such.

I.
THE MERCY OF GOD.

It is manifested in the clearest light, when we consider:

1. *The debt of the servant*, which consisted of the immense sum of ten thousand talents. This illustrates the infinite malice of the sinner, whose sin is committed against a being of infinite dignity, against God himself; and against his greatest benefactor, from whom he has received all his good gifts, even his very life.

2. *The efficacious prayer of the servant*, who, "falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." This is an exhortation for us (*a*) not to deny our debt but to acknowledge and confess it freely and sincerely; (*b*) to repent of having contracted it, and to humble ourselves in the dust on account of it; (*c*) to make the firm resolution not to contract new debts but to pay the old ones according to our ability; in other words, to give satisfaction. "I will pay thee all."

3. *The grace and mercy of the Lord.* Jesus alludes (*a*) to his satisfaction and merits. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." I John ii, 1. (*b*) To the infinite love of his Heavenly Father, who freely and generously, out of his infinite mercy and compassion, remits to his offending creature the immense debt of mortal sin; (*c*) to our duty of gratitude and the grievousness of ingratitude by abusing the divine mercy.

II.

THE EXECRABLE INHUMANITY OF THE SERVANT.

We see this inhumanity by reflecting

1. *On the several circumstances*, under which the servant commits his atrocious act. These are (*a*) the time, viz., immediately after receiving the greatest benefit, when his heart should have been moved with the tenderest compassion. (*b*) The equality of condition, both being servants, and servants of the same kind master. (*c*) The mere trifle owed him, and the entreaties and humiliations of the fellow-servant. (*d*) The inhuman treatment of the fellow-servant. After receiving the remission of an immense sum, he goes forth, and throttling his fellow-servant, inexorably casts him into prison, without giving him a moment's respite or delay. Such is the cruelty and inhumanity of the sinner, who, after being gratuitously and mercifully forgiven his mortal sins by his Lord and Master, and Creator, refuses forgiveness to his fellow-servants, his fellow-creatures, with whom he shares the same common nature, whose weakness he knows, on whom he is often dependent for mutual aid and assistance.

2. *On the just accusation* brought against him, not out of uncharitableness but out of just indignation, because (*a*) a correction by his fellow-servants would have been of no avail; and (*b*) because so grievous a crime challenged the avenging justice of God. If we act in the same uncharitable manner, similar accusers will rise against us also: the holy guardian angels, the Saints of heaven, our just fellow-men, the tears of widows and of orphans. Ecclus. xxxv, 18, 19.

III.

THE JUDGMENT WITHOUT MERCY.

The Lord being angry, now administers the strictest justice

1. *By summoning the servant.* The summons to appear before the judgment of the heavenly King (*a*) will reach us all, and many a one, because of the enormity of their sins, before the time. "We must also appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." II Cor. v, 10. (*b*) Their deeds will be consoling to the just,—dreadful to the sinner. "What shall I do when God shall rise to judge? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?" Job xxxi, 14.

2. *By the reproaches he made him*, which (*a*) were well-founded and containing a very humiliating comparison between the king and himself; and (*b*) against which we can say nothing; since, by hoping for divine mercy, we condemn our own unmercifulness. "I will send my wrath upon thee; and I will judge thee according to thy ways; and I will set all thy abominations against thee."

3. *By the punishment inflicted*, from which we learn (*a*) that God will judge without mercy him who hath not done mercy, James ii, 13; (*b*) that the necessary condition of obtaining divine mercy is to forgive from our hearts.

Now, as there is no one among us who does not desire to hear a propitious sentence out of the mouth of the omniscient Judge; so let there be no one among you who is not ready to forgive his brother from his heart.

VIII.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO A MODEL, TEACHER AND FATHER TO HIS FLOCK.

(*Feast of St. Charles Borromeo.*)

In a time of feeble faith and dissolute morals the providence

of God raised up a mere youth to renew the life of his Church, and especially to restore faith and morals in the see of Milan. He was possessed in an eminent degree of all those qualities that are demanded of a successor of the Apostles. It was St. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal of the Roman church, the nephew of Pope Pius IV, a born prince. He was elevated to the Archiepiscopal see of Milan, and regarded himself, on account of his elevation as a teacher of the ignorant, and, on account of his wealth, as a father of the poor.

I.

HE EDIFIED HIS FLOCK BY HIS EXAMPLE.

"It behoveth a bishop to be blameless." I Tim. iii, 2. St. Charles was blameless, not only as bishop, but throughout his whole life. He led an edifying life

1. Before he was elevated to the episcopal dignity, so that he rendered himself worthy of his elevation.

a. When a child his conduct manifested a longing for wisdom, modesty and religion, both for himself and others.

b. When a boy he resolved to devote himself to the service of the altar, and prepared himself for his sublime vocation by frequent participation of the holy sacraments, by prayer, by a purity of morals which resisted all temptations of youth. An incumbent of an ecclesiastical benefice, he urged his father to use its emoluments for charitable purposes.

c. As a young cleric, he exercised diligently the virtues and duties of his state of life, and, by his example and exhortation, induced religious persons to restore discipline in their cloisters.

2. He gave to all a good example after his elevation to the episcopal dignity. As Cardinal and Archbishop he was only intent upon propagating the kingdom of God. His humility and zeal of prayer increased. His only ambition was to be a faithful steward of the Lord. Therefore he entered upon the arduous work of carrying into execution the decrees of the council of Trent. Whilst the pretended reformation was consummating its work of destruction, he showed to men what a true reformation

is in the Church of God. He exhibited in himself the edifying example of a true reformer, so that, in his efforts to restore discipline, he could say with St. Paul to those committed to his care: "Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi." His good example was accompanied by an indefatigable zeal in instructing his flock.

II.

HE AMENDED THE MORALS OF HIS FLOCK BY TEACHING.

An ignorant and corrupt people cannot be converted to truth and good morals, except by men who teach indefatigably Christian doctrine. St. Charles himself preached the word of God with unwearied zeal.

1. He traveled throughout his whole diocese, instructing the faithful. No parish was too remote, no valley to deep, no mountain too high: he went himself to restore good order. He was neither deterred by the people and clergy, nor by the malign spirit of the heretics, or by the unfavorable times.

2. *He combated heresy.* He was ever on the watch against the creeping poison of error. He humbled the pride of the seducers, and won the victory over them.

3. *He instructed especially those priests*, who were living in ignorance and immorality. He held conferences, and delivered sermons. He endeavored to quicken their faith and zeal. He gained their affection by meekness and patience; and by his community of Oblates trained many of his clerics to perfection. To those who would not obey he showed severity and firmness.

4. *He was solicitous in his care of every one.* He never showed rigor, until he had exhausted all the recourses of gentleness. His success was, consequently, marvellous. Monks and priests, inveterate sinners, did penance. Nuns, before indifferent to public scandal, rose up from their sins new creatures, and, by sincere penance, became the models of perfect religious; the seminaries were filled with zealous clerics; the nobility became pious, the subject obedient, superiors charitable, servants faithful. Behold the power of Christian doctrine, when preached by true followers of the Apostles.

III.

HE WAS A FATHER TO THE POOR.

Nothing becomes priests more than charity and mercy to the poor. For by this virtue they show that they are true sons of their mother, who always was a mother of the poor. No one took ever more care of the poor, than St. Charles.

1. *He himself lived in poverty*, through love of the poor. Although he was the heir of great wealth, his palace displayed no riches but the riches of virtue, and the signs of penance. His own humility, his charity and modesty were, so to speak, his servants.

2. *He gave all to the poor.* He spent all his wealth, as well as the emoluments of his position in relieving the misery of the poor, in establishing pious institutions, in founding schools for the poor, and seminaries for the clerics. He himself would sit by the road-side to teach a poor man the *Pater* and *Ave*, and would enter hovels the stench of which drove his attendants from the door.

3. *He sacrificed himself*, that he might save the poor. After he had distributed all he had amongst the needy, he was ready to sacrifice himself,—his very life. During the great plague he refused to leave Milan, and was ever by the bedside of the sick and dying, and sold even his bed for their support. He offered to God his life for the sins of his flock; and God accepted the sacrifice of the good shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep.

This charity of St. Charles is to us an urgent exhortation to aid our fellow-men in their many needs. There is no one who could not imitate him in one respect or another.

Flechier.

Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

The doctrine inculcated in to-day's Gospel is contained in the words: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Jesus spoke these words when a question much ventilated among the Jews was proposed to him, the question: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" By putting this question, the Jews showed their own malice; and by the answer given to it, Jesus showed his divine wisdom.

I.

THE WICKEDNESS OF THE QUESTION.

1. "The Pharisees going away, consulted among themselves how to ensnare him in his speech." Jesus had spoken to them the parables of the husbandmen who killed the son of the lord of the vineyard, and of the stone that, although rejected by the builders, became the head of the corner, and well understood that these parables were intended for themselves. "The chief priests and the Scribes sought to lay hands on him the same hour: but they feared the people: for they knew that he spoke this parable against them. And, being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should feign to be just men, that they might take hold of him in his words, that they might deliver him up to the authority and power of the governor." Lk. xx, 19.

Instead of being struck with feelings of dread at the punishment menaced by our Redeemer, and conceiving feelings of true sorrow, they became more hardened in their iniquity, and endeavored to ensnare him. They resolved to propose a question to him, the answer to which would either enable them to represent him to the Romans as an instigator of the people against their dominion, or to the people as one who looked with complacency on the subjugation of his nation. For this purpose the

Pharisees sent, together with their disciples, some Herodians, members of a political party, who favored the Roman government.

The priests of the New Law must not wonder at being treated in the same manner as their Lord and Master. They too are denounced as adversaries of the existing secular authority, although their religious belief compels them to maintain it.

2. They said to him: "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth: neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of men." Full of deceit and dissimulation, they reproach our Redeemer with affected feelings of respect, and they address to him the language of flattery, thus hoping to throw him off his guard, and to elicit from him the desired answer, unfavorable to the payment of tribute. They call him by the name of "*Master;*" they call him a candid, sincere, speaker, who teaches the will, the law of God, *in truth*, without any admixture of error. Thou art not afraid of any one, however powerful, so as to be deterred from announcing the truth. In this it is insinuated, that others were deterred, by the fear of Cæsar, from giving utterance to their real sentiments, on the subject of paying tribute to the Romans.

After these hollow, hypocritical, compliments, they propose to him the question: "Tell me, therefore, what dost thou think; is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" In answering this question, Jesus displayed his divine wisdom.

II.

THE WISDOM OF THE ANSWER.

1. "But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites?" Our Redeemer shows himself superior to the artifices whereby it was sought to entrap him. They thought to ensnare him by their false, hollow professions of respect, and by captious questions. On the other hand he exposes their hypocrisy, while, in affecting to exhibit respect for

him, and to ascertain the truth, they only wished to lay snares for him.

If we detest and abhor the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, let us not sink into the same abominable vice. But alas! Jesus might often say to us also: "Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites?" We call him our God, our Master, our Saviour. Can he not answer us: "If I am your God, where is your love, reverence and obedience?" You ask him in church for chastity, temperance and other virtues; and as soon as you have left the church, you act perhaps in direct opposition to your prayer. Is not this hypocrisy?

2. "Show me the coin of the tribute," that is, the coin which Cæsar exacted as a tax from every person. Jesus replies, that it is lawful to render to Cæsar the coin that bore the image of Cæsar, the more, as the Jews, by accepting this coin in their dealings, acknowledged themselves subjects of the Romans.

Our Redeemer, at the same time, in order to meet the charge of neglecting the interests of God's people, adds, "and unto God the things that are God's."

These last words are also addressed to every one of us. Our souls have impressed upon them God's image and likeness, as on the coin the image of Cæsar was impressed. We are therefore bound to return to God our souls, by devoting to him and to his holy service, our memory, understanding, and will, which are the image and superscription of the eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient King.

VIII.

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS A FAITHFUL STEWARD.

St. Martin served God faithfully in every state of his life. All is great and wonderful in him. "He was good as soldier, better yet in the habit of the monk, better still in the episcopal see." St. Bonaventure. St. Martin was ever faithful in the discharge of his duties, as we shall see by contemplating him in his various states of life.

I.

THE VIRTUES OF THE SOLDIER.

Martin, a brave soldier, did not tread the path of vice, along which so many are enticed who have devoted themselves to the military profession. He shone, on the contrary, in the lustre of precious virtues. We admire especially

1. *His love for the poor;* a rare virtue in war and in soldiers. Martin left not only all that belonged to others intact; but distributed what belonged to him, among the poor. He performed even heroic acts of charity. One winter's day, when stationed at Amiens, he met a beggar almost naked and frozen with cold. Having no money, he cut his cloak in two and gave him the half. Our Lord rewarded him instantly. That night he saw Jesus clothed in the half cloak, and heard him say to the angels: "Martin, yet a catechumen, hath wrapped me in this garment."

2. *His chastity.* Victory in the continual combats of the flesh is seldom achieved, courage in the struggle is almost unknown to soldiers. The vice of impurity had, to an alarming degree, infected the army in which Martin's name was enrolled; yet he so guarded his innocence, that Sulpicius Severus was justified in saying of him: "His chastity was purer than glass, and whiter than milk."

3. *His trust in God.* Soldiers, as a general rule, trust in their own valor, strength, and arms. They do not remember God who gives victory. Martin took for his shield, in all danger, confidence in God, and did not tremble when the bravest lost courage. At a subsequent period of his life, he left the army, yet not without having given an evidence of his courage; for he made the offer, with the cross as his only weapon, to march through the forces of the enemy.—If he was so conspicuous for his virtues as a soldier,—how holy was his life likely to be as a hermit!

II.

THE SANCTITY OF THE HERMIT.

In the solitude of the cloister Martin soon attained such a

degree of sanctity, that he deserved to be called by St. Peter Damiani, the light of monks, the model of clerics, the honor of priests. He showed his sanctity

1. *By his profound humility.* Without this virtue it is impossible to erect the edifice of perfection. Martin possessed this virtue when a soldier; and, as monk, he exhibited himself a model of humility. Although reverenced by all, he regarded himself as the least of all.

2. *By his austere penance.* Martin was so austere in fasting, watching and other works of penance, that it is hard to explain how he could have preserved his life. Severus relates, that his bed was a pile of ashes, his pillow a stone, his apparel an old worn-out tunic, beneath which he wore a sack.

3. *By his miracles.* As monk he commenced working miracles, and as bishop he was another Thaumaturgus. St. Bernard enumerates the following miracles wrought by him: "St. Martin raised to life three dead persons. He restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, power to walk to the lame; he escaped danger by divine protection, and checked conflagration by the intervention of his own body," etc.

III.

THE PERFECTION OF THE BISHOP.

Christian perfection consists in love; for he who loves, possesses all virtues. Martin possessed perfect love, for which he was conspicuous especially as bishop. He possessed

1. *A beneficient love.* We must show our love for God especially by charitable works for the benefit of the children of God, of the members of the Church, and particularly of those who are forsaken by others. So did St. Martin. St. Bonaventure says of him, that he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, restricting himself to what was absolutely necessary. He did not relax the austerity of his life, although he had to hear many reproaches. In regard to others he was very much inclined to mildness.

2. *A patient love* in fulfilling his episcopal duties. He bore cheerfully innumerable and grievous afflictions, not only those

that were inseparable from his dignity, but also those that wicked men, the envious heretics, and pagans, had prepared for him. His afflictions were so great, that St. Bernard places him among the martyrs.

3. *A zealous love*, so that his heart was continually united with God, in the midst of his many labors. He always conversed with God, prayed incessantly and sighed for inseparable union with him. Yet he cared so little for his own advantage that he said on his death-ded: "Lord, if I be yet necessary to thy people, I decline not to labor, thy will be done."

Such is the model of Christian perfection; a model to the man of the world, to the religious, to priests, to bishops. Let us endeavor to imitate this holy pattern.

Laselve.

Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.
HOMILY.

In to-day's Gospel we read of a poor woman, who had been troubled with an issue of blood twelve years; and of a young girl who had died a premature death. Jesus showed himself to be the Lord of nature, by healing the woman, and by raising the dead to life. Let these two miracles be the subject of our meditation.

I.
JESUS HEALS THE SICK WOMAN.

1. "And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him." The holy Evangelists Mark and Luke relate, that she had suffered many things from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing the better, but rather worse. Mk. v, 25. She had heard of the Son of David, who healed the sick, and went to implore his help.

This impoverished woman, who had been sick twelve years, is the representative of all sick, poor, and afflicted persons, who long for help but do not find it. Whoever among you belong to either of these classes of sufferers, do not lose your confidence in God. His hour is not yet come, when he will take your cross from your shoulders. Do not lose patience, that you may fulfill the will of God, who intends to sanctify you by tribulations. In his own good time he will release you.

2. "She came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I but touch his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning about and seeing her, said: Take courage, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

We learn from this, that *faith*, viz., her belief in the power of our Lord and her confidence in his goodness, acted as a disposition, or meritorious cause, for the beneficent exercise of the power of the Almighty in her favor. If she is a model of faith, the root and foundation of justification, she is also a model of humility, the foundation of all moral virtues. For she came behind him, deeming herself unworthy to look in his face, because of her legal uncleanness (Lev. xv, 25). And by touching his garment, she was healed, whereby our Lord sanctioned the veneration of holy relics.

The early historians of the Church, Eusebius, Sozomen, and Philostorgius inform us, that this woman was a native of Cesarea Philippi, and that she erected a statue of our Lord in front of her house, to commemorate this event. Socrates relates, that Julian, the apostate, removed this statue, and had his own set up in its place, and that a strong fire from heaven shattered the apostate's statue to pieces.

Let us, in all our needs, have recourse to Jesus, who, from heaven, looks down upon us, as he looked down upon St. Stephen. He is especially anxious in the most Blessed Sacrament to hear and grant our prayers, wherein he invites us, not only to touch the hem of his garment, but to receive his most adorable Flesh

and Blood. If he does not hear our petitions, it is not, because he is not present, but because we lack confidence in him.

II.

JESUS RAISES THE DEAD MAIDEN TO LIFE.

1. When Jesus was teaching the people, "behold, a certain ruler came, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just now dead: but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." We learn from St. Mark and St. Luke, that this ruler was named *Jairus*. The maiden was about twelve years old, and the only child of her parents. Mk. v, 42. Lk. viii, 42.

As the same Evangelists relate, the ruler fell down before Jesus, to pay him homage. We must imitate his example, and render the same external homage to Jesus in the most blessed sacrament, by making devoutly our genuflexion when we enter a church.

The death of this maiden, who was only twelve years old, reminds all young people of death. Be therefore prepared that death may not find you in sin.

2. "And Jesus rising up, followed him with his disciples. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, he said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at him. And when the crowd was turned out, he went in and took her by the hand: and the girl arose." Let us here adore:

a. The mercy of Jesus. He is ever ready to help those who are in distress. He rose up at once, and followed the sorrowing father of the dead maiden.

Let us always be ready to console the afflicted; and let us not defer our aid.

b. The wisdom of Jesus. He said: "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth." The death of the girl was rather a sleep, because she was at once to be raised to life.—Death in itself is a sleep, and is frequently called so in Scriptures. Hence, according to Christian usage, the word, *cemetery* or *sleeping place* designates the burial-place of the departed. For the dead will rise

from the grave, when the new morning dawns that knows no evening.

Let us, whenever we go to sleep, remember death, and never take the rest of the night, before we have made an act of perfect contrition of our sins.

c. The omnipotence of Jesus. "He took her by the hand, and the girl arose." A vivifying power resided in his vivifying Flesh, from its hypostatic union with the Divinity. Oh! let us frequently receive this divine Flesh in Holy Communion, that we may find life everlasting for body and soul.

"And the fame thereof went abroad into all that country." Let us also take a delight in meditating and conversing on the holy life and miraculous deeds of our Jesus.

VIII.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY.

If good example generally exercises a great influence upon our morals, how efficacious must then be the example of the Saints, these perfect models of virtue! Meditation on their lives is, consequently, a powerful means of promoting our progress in virtue. With this object in view, I invite your attention to-day to the wonderful life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, one of the most shining lights in the starry heaven of the Saints. Her life reminds us most forcibly of several important truths, which I intend to propose to your meditation.

I.

THE VALUE OF A RIGHT EDUCATION.

1. St. Elizabeth was trained in the fear of God and in solid piety. Born in Hungary A. D. 1207, a daughter of king Andrew II., and betrothed in infancy to Louis, Landgrave of Thuringia, she was brought up in his father's court.

a. When eight years old, she bade farewell to all the pleasures and vanities of the world.

b. Following the impulses of the Holy Ghost, she was

ever intent upon meditating on God, upon conversing about him, and upon devoting to him all her actions.

c. Prayer was her delight, her most cherished abode the church, at the entrance of which she laid down her golden crown out of reverence for Jesus crowned with thorns.

d. She was never deterred from her pious practices by the reproaches and ridicule of the courtiers, whom she overcame by patience, humility and great confidence in God.

2. In the same manner Christian parents should bring up their children teaching them

a. The fear of God and piety. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Prov. i, 7.

b. Abhorrence of every sin, so that whenever the temptation to commit sin presents itself, they may say with Joseph of Egypt: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" Gen. xxxix, 9.

c. To say regularly their prayers and to attend frequently divine worship.

Instead of this, many parents train their children in pride and vanity by luxury, and in the lust of the flesh by dancing, bad companionship, loose reading, and the like.

II.

FRUIT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

1. Prepared by an exemplary education, she fulfilled the duties of the married state with scrupulous conscientiousness:

a. As wife and mother. With charity and faithfulness she was ever devoted to her "brother," as she used to call her husband,—to her children she was the tenderest of mothers.

b. As princess, she strove to alleviate public misery, and to repair any wrongs that might have been done to her subjects.

c. As a true Christian, she served Jesus Christ by spiritual as well as by corporal works of mercy, for the relief of the poor, widows, orphans, of the sick and even lepers.

Christian education ever bears good fruit, which displays itself

a. In the faithful fulfillment of the duties of whatever state of life.

b. In charitable works performed by all good Christians; especially by those religious orders whose object is the relief of the suffering members of the human family.

III.

THE FICKLENESS OF HUMAN FORTUNE.

1. St. Elizabeth experienced the saddest change of fortune.

a. By the premature death of her husband, she became a widow in her young years. How great was the grief of her tender heart! But she bore this affliction with heroic fortitude.

b. Charged with dilapidation, deprived of her possessions, even of her dowry, expelled from her castle with her children, and finding no abode, like the Mother of God in Bethlehem, she lived with her children on alms, and, later on, by the work of her hands.

2. Many, especially those who desire to live piously in Christ Jesus, experience a similar change of fortune. Among them we find many widows, who are persecuted by calumny and oppression.

a. Let pious widows trust in God. "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, let her hope in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day." I Tim. v, 5.

b. To widows who are given to levity, reprobation is very salutary, that they, as penitent daughters, may return to their Father. The Apostle describes their foolish mode of living I Tim. v, 13, and says, that a widow who lives in carnal pleasures, is dead while she is living. Afflictions may be the last means of arousing her from her sleep.

IV.

THE FIRST VICTORY OF PERSECUTED INNOCENCE.

1. St. Elizabeth was recalled to her high station and reinstated in all her rights. Yet knowing the vanity of the world, she found no charm in earthly things.

a. She left the castle, after having arranged her family affairs, to live in a poor hovel in the town of *Marburg*.

b. She spent her days in works of piety and charity, taking indefatigable care of the poor and sick in an hospital founded by her.

c. Only twenty-four years old, she died the death of the Saints on the 19th of November, 1231. Pope Gregory IX enrolled her name in the list of the Saints.

2. May God grant, that our death be similar to hers! "Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them." Numb. xxiii, 10. St. Elizabeth died in her youth; but this was no loss to her.

a. Death is a messenger of peace to those of the young, who have lived in innocence. "Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased God." Wisd. iv, 13.

b. But we have reason to fear and tremble lest we be visited by a premature death caused by sin. "He that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption." Gal. vi, 8.

Only a pious life is terminated by a blessed death. If we desire to die as Saints, we ought to live as Saints. Let us then follow the example of St. Elizabeth, and the Lord will be propitious to us in life and death.

Jonas.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

VII.

HOMILY.

We should not wonder that our Redeemer predicts two events in one prophecy, of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the consummation of the world. For not to mention, that the disciples had inquired about both events (Mt. xxiv, 3); the destruction of Jerusalem was a figure of the consummation of the world. As therefore the prophets of the Old Testament united the figure and that which was prefigured to one prophecy, as for instance the return out of the Babylonish captivity, and the redemption of mankind of sin, which was prefigured by the former; so our Lord speaks of the destruction of the holy city and the consummation of the world together, as if they were one event. That we may now enter upon the details, I will divide my observations upon the prophecy in to-day's Gospel, into three parts.

1. *Jesus speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem exclusively.*

a. We understand by the *abomination of desolation standing in the holy place* the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army; for their standards were adorned with images of their false gods, and of their emperors to whom they paid divine homage, called in the language of Holy Scriptures, *abomination*; and they were the abomination *of desolation*, because they were the signs that announced to Jerusalem its permanent destruction and desolation.

b. Then when you see all this happening, it shall be a signal for you to escape, with all haste, for your lives.

The Christians followed closely this exhortation of the Lord to take to flight, fleeing mostly to *Pella*, whilst the unfaithful Jews, who had thronged together in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Pasch from nearly all parts of the Roman empire, fell victims to the divine vengeance.

In a spiritual sense we may apply the above words of our Saviour to ourselves, insofar as we are obliged, at the approach of temptation, to take to flight, and that speedily, especially in carnal temptations, when our salvation is secured, not so much by combat, as by flight upon the eternal mountains, that is, by frequent prayer.

2. *Jesus speaks of both events at once.*

a. "For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be." No city was ever visited with such dreadful and almost incredible calamities, as the city of the Deicides, who invoked the blood of the Son of God on themselves and on their children. Yet those days of sadness and bloodshed are only a feeble type of the days that are to precede the last judgment.—At the destruction of Jerusalem the days of tribulation were shortened on account of the elect of the Jewish nation; and at the consummation of the world they shall be shortened, that the elect may not be tempted above measure.

b. Therefore Jesus warns his disciples of false christs, and false prophets, who arose at the times preceding the capture of Jerusalem, and shall arise before the end of the world. They shall show great signs and wonders, by the aid of magic, by the aid of the demon, the father of lies; and with such dexterity and plausibility, as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect; whom, however, God will protect from error by his special grace; and in this sense it is said, that they cannot be deceived. Then he says, that his second coming will not be confined to an obscure spot, but will be like the lightning of heaven, which appears brilliant, effulgent, and dazzling, at the same moment, in the opposite parts of the heavens. And alluding to a Hebrew proverb he says, that, as the eagles are carried aloft through space in quest of a dead body from an incredible distance, so his elect will be born aloft in the air to meet Christ, comparing himself, thus, to a dead body on account of his death, endured for our sakes, to procure glory for us. He will, therefore, appear with the prints of his wounds in his body.

3. *Jesus speaks of the consummation of the world exclusively.*

a. What our Lord says of the sun that shall be darkened, and of the moon that shall not give her light, and of the stars that shall fall from heaven, and of the powers of heaven that shall be moved, i. e., the entire heavenly system which shall be shaken to its centre, is to be understood literally; and we have no right to inquire how all this is possible, since with God nothing is impossible. The shape of the universe will pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, in conformity with the renovation of mankind by the resurrection.

b. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," either the real cross on which our Redeemer achieved the victory over death and hell, or merely an image or resplendent figure of it, formed in the air. "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn," that is, all the impious and infidels, who refused to receive our Lord, or to obey his commandments, and the Jews particularly. And he shall send his angels to call the dead before the judgment-seat. A noise louder than thunder ("trumpet") shall reverberate throughout creation, and a great voice shall be heard, saying: "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment."

c. "And from the fig-tree learn a parable," i. e., an illustration. As you know from its leaves coming forth, that summer is nigh, so also you, when you shall see all these things, know that your redemption, your glorification is near. The Jewish nation ("this generation") shall be preserved until the Day of Judgment, as a testimony for Christ, while other nations will pass away. Heaven and earth, as to their present form, shall pass away; but the words of Christ shall not pass away, none of the words that you have heard from this pulpit during the past ecclesiastical year.

VIII.

ST. CATHERINE, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

St. Catherine is one of the Saints who are best known and

most venerated by the faithful. Churches and altars are erected in her honor; sodalities and confraternities bear her name; and many children have her assigned to them as their patroness and pattern in holy Baptism. Let us reflect on her virtues, and follow her example.

I.

HER YOUTH.

1. She was of princely descent.

a. Her greatest nobility, however, was her faith, sanctity and martyrdom. Terrestrial rank and dignity vanish away; only celestial dignity lasts for ever.

b. God has chosen his Saints from every state of life, that every state may have its models. Poverty involves the most hardships, wealth, the most danger and strife.

2. Her conversion to the Christian faith.

a. It was the work of special divine inspiration. Before her baptism, as the acts relate, she saw in vision the Blessed Virgin ask her Son to receive her among his servants, but the Divine Infant turned away. The vocation to faith is, in every case, the work of divine grace, unmerited, and therefore worthy of our sincere gratitude.

b. Catherine obeyed the impulses of grace, and then after baptism saw the same vision, when Jesus Christ received her with great affection, and espoused her before the court of heaven. Without our co-operation grace is not only useless, but also the occasion of greater condemnation.

3. Some characteristic traits of her youth.

a. She gave herself entirely to God in her early life. "Remember thy Creator in thy youth," etc. Eccle. xii, 1. The time of our youth is of great importance. See Prov. xxii, 6.

b. She was ever intent upon learning the doctrines of the faith, and attained a high degree of wisdom. "This is life everlasting, that they might know thee, the only true God." John xvii, 3. Hence you learn that it is your duty, Christian parents, to instruct your children in the faith, and to have them instructed in Christian schools. And upon adult the sacred duty

is also incumbent of increasing in the knowledge of their holy religion.

c. Her morals were in conformity with the holy faith. She devoted herself entirely to God, made the virginal vow, prayed incessantly, and resisted the allurements and bad examples of the world which were then exceedingly corrupt.

II.

CATHERINE BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT.

Many of you think, if the persecution of the Christians should still rage, you would cheerfully give your lives for Jesus Christ,—because it seems to you easier to secure their salvation by torments of short duration, than by striving for virtue during a lifetime. This is, however, a delusion. St. Catherine was a Saint, wherefore she was prepared for, and worthy of, the martyr's crown, whilst other ladies of noble birth yielded to the impious tyrant, Maximin II.

1. Her zeal for the salvation of souls led her into the hands of her persecutors.

a. She presented herself voluntarily before the judge, in order to strengthen by her example of fortitude the many feeble Christians, and to convert the Gentiles by her example of Christian heroism.

b. Oh! that we were also possessed of a similar zeal in warning wavering innocence, in strengthening the feeble in faith, in converting sinners! Vide James v, 19, 20.

2. Her victory over the fifty philosophers, who, invited by Maximin to convince Catherine of the falsehood of Christian teaching, were all converted to the holy faith, and suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ.

a. Truth is irresistible to those of good will. Only wickedness and pride, frequently connected with superficial knowledge, are the enemies of Christianity.

b. To be steadfast in faith, endeavor to acquire a perfect knowledge of the Christian doctrine, adhere to the teaching of the Church, and, like St. Catherine, lead a virtuous life, vice and lukewarmness being the common causes of unbelief.

III.

ST. CATHERINE IN HER TORMENTS.

The prison was the reward for her giving testimony to the truth, as it still is now-a-day's in many countries.

1. *The visit of the empress.*

Being desirous to see the servant of God, she came, accompanied by Porphyry and two hundred soldiers, to see St. Catherine in the prison, and beholding her face radiant with the beauty of her soul, she prostrated herself at her feet. She and Porphyry and his soldiers won the martyrs' crown.

Whoever is of good will, cannot refuse to reverence virtue.

2. *The enticements of the emperor.*

He first promised to elevate her to his throne; then he threatened to destroy her beauty; whereupon the Saint replied, that her only desire to be the bride of Jesus Christ; and as to beauty, she warned him not to regard much that which sickness, and old age would destroy: an urgent exhortation to all virgins to despise flatteries, never to enter the married state by the path of sin, and to prefer the friendship of Jesus all above human considerations. The words of St. Catherine contain also a warniing against pride and vanity.

3. *The martyr's victory.*

a. The wheel on which her virginal body was to be torn, —the cruel invention of hatred—having been destroyed by a lightning flash, was the occasion of many conversions. The machinations of sinners often serve to execute the designs of God.

b. At last she won the palm ardently longed for, by the sword, after she had given thanks for all graces received, asked forgiveness of her sins, the conversion of the Gentiles, and that the prayers of those who would invoke her intercession might be granted.

A holy life is terminated by a holy death. Let us confidently invoke the glorified martyr and virgin, and, above all, let us imitate her example.

Scherer.

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